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- 2012 Allegro Bus 43QGP with bath & a half
- The Magnificent Hudson River Valley
- New for 2012

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Roughing It Smoothly®

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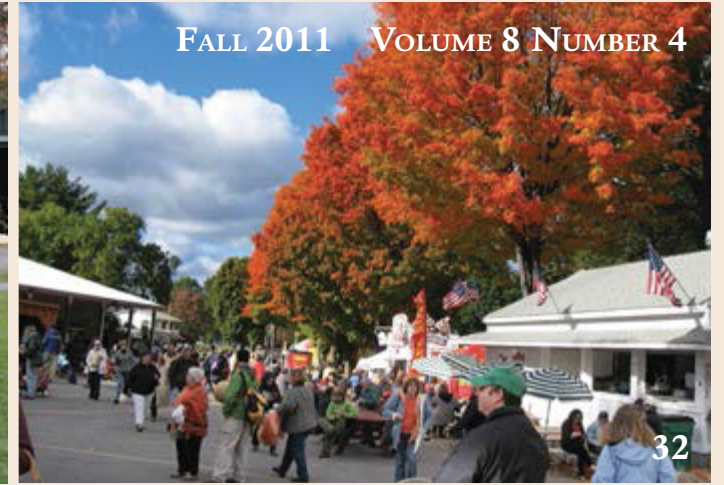
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Letters, We Get Letters . . . and Postcards and Emails

In 2010 we did the travel and research for our Fall travel story in the Hudson River Valley. After spending two weeks in the midst of the fall color season, we knew we wanted to come back soon for another visit. If you live in the northeastern states, you may still be able to visit a few of the spots before the campgrounds begin to close. We hope you will save this issue to plan your trip next Fall to "The Magnificent Hudson River Valley." It is worth two weeks of your time. The Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome is a winner. I thoroughly enjoyed the 25-minute flight in the open cockpit Standard D-25 biplane. The pilot can take two passengers at a time. Carolyn declined to join me and checked my life insurance policy before allowing me to go. My seatmate was a chap

from England whose wife was six months pregnant—and she didn't seem to mind him going at all. Although I took at least 50 shots during the flight, the image on page 26 was taken as we circled to land on the amazingly short grass runway. The three-hour show featured World War I combat planes, a stunt plane performance, and a comedy routine that delighted the younger set. As I write this, Norman Spray is traveling to Galveston, Texas, to do a story for our winter edition which will mail in mid-January. Best wishes for many colorful miles this Fall as you enjoy roughing it smoothly in your Tiffin coach.

From the Road

To tell us about your experiences on the road, you may use the postcard

bound in this issue, send a longer letter to the address at left, but using "From the Road" in the first line, or send an email to fredthompson1941@hotmail.com with "From the Road" in the subject line.

Serious Tech Talk

To address your technical questions to Danny Inman, you may use the postcard bound in this issue, send a longer letter to the address at left (put "Serious Tech Talk" in the first line), or send an email to RISstechtalk@gmail.com. If you need an immediate answer to a service problem, you should call 256-356-0261.

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cult to handle the call on a cell phone. Please use a standard change of address card from USPS or send the change by email. In the subject line, put "RIS Address Change."

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Tiffin coach owners may receive a free subscription by **writing** to *Roughing It Smoothly*®, 1403 Cedar Point Way, Monroe, GA 30656 or **emailing** fredthompson1941@hotmail.com. Please include your phone number, the last six characters of your vehicle identification number (VIN), and the year and model of your coach. If you sell your coach, **email** stephanie.umfress@tiffinmotorhomes.com with your VIN, year and model, and the new owner's address.

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Realizing the importance of celebrating their 40th anniversary, Tiffin Motorhomes commissioned a new logo incorporating its pewter shield and its signature typeface for the company name. TMH wanted to give its owners another reason to be proud of the company that builds some of the finest motorhomes in America. Throughout the model year for 2012, you will see continued use of the new logo in corporate branding.

Red Bay in the Seventies

by Bob and David Tiffin, Jane Williams, and Scotty Kennedy*

Tiffin Motorhomes began in the Fall of 1972 and built five campers in December. With only 25 employees, the company got started building one motorhome per day. It wasn't long before we were building 'em hand over fist. If people today think our economy is in crisis, they should do a memory recall to October 1973.

When the U.S. decided to resupply Israel's military during the Yom Kippur War, the OPEC nations countered by cutting off our crude oil supply. There were lines at gas stations throughout the county that were a half-mile long. TMH's parts supply lines were slowed to a trickle or cut off completely. We could not get fuel to ship the motorhomes we were able to build. Gas stations began to close completely. During the first quarter of 1974, Tiffin Motorhomes built only 13 campers.

Tiffin Motorhomes used up the financial reserves of Tiffin Supply, the company that was begun in 1941 by our father, Alex Tiffin. Charles Cashion from the bank met with the company's stockholders and said it was time to "shut it down." Daddy personally backed a loan for \$200,000 and told me to do the best I could to get sales back up.

I heard that South Grocery in Golden, Mississippi, just five miles away, had received a large delivery of gas. David called to ask the owner how much he would sell to TMH. "As much as you can haul," was the response. David borrowed a 4,000-gallon fuel trailer and filled it up. The purchase allowed us to start shipping the units we had ready. The embargo ended in April and our business took off again.

In 1979 in a similar situation, we were faced with the Iranian hostage crisis during the Carter administration. The gas shortages throughout the country were so severe that truckers went on strike and used their rigs to block major highways. Incidents like that happened around here, too. The truckers blocked the highway at Gober's Gin, backing up traffic for miles. Red Bay Chief of Police McKinney with several deputies persuaded the truckers to cease the blockade. On U.S. 43 near Russellville, John L. Miller, a logger, stopped and told truckers who were blocking the highway that he would be coming through the next day with his log truck and that he would be riding shotgun – for real! They had better not be there, he said. Miller passed through



From left: David and Bob Tiffin, Scotty Kennedy, and Jane Williams.

without incident the next day. On Hwy. 25 near Belmont, Mississippi, another logger named Coot Horn waved his shotgun and told truckers blocking the highway to get off the road. They did.

During the 1970s home building continued at a good pace which made business good for Tiffin Supply. Building contractors were quite often family-operated concerns. Fathers taught sons the business – there were probably 30 contractors doing business with Tiffin Supply during the seventies. The city's three mayors during the decade were Charles Cashion (1968–1972), L.N. Flippo (1972–1976), and John Faust (1976–1980).

Red Bay had three doctors at the beginning of the decade: Dr. Walker Dempsey, Dr. Z. L. Weatherford, and Dr. Floyd Underwood. Dr. Dempsey had his clinic in the building where the Backstreet Barbeque is located today. The Red Bay Hospital was built in 1969 and Dr. Dempsey put out a call for new doctors to move to Red Bay. Dr. Edward Rose came in 1972 through the sponsorship of the National Health Service Corps. Doctors would agree to work in underserved rural areas in return for the NHSC paying off their college debt. The University of Alabama–Birmingham residency program placed Drs. Victor Norman and Raynard Fabianke in Red Bay.

Continued on page 72

*In last quarter's "President's Corner," you met David Tiffin, my brother, who helped me write "Red Bay in the Sixties." I wanted that column to tell you what it was like in the sixties when Red Bay was a farming town. During that decade, David and I worked in our Dad's store, Tiffin Supply. Now, to tell you more about Red Bay in the seventies when I started Tiffin Motorhomes, I asked Jane Williams and Scotty Kennedy to join David and me for a little roundtable discussion. I grew up with Jane and we graduated from Red Bay High School in

1960. Jane is a graduate of the University of Alabama School of Nursing. She retired after 43 years of nursing and hospital administration. Scotty graduated from RBHS in 1975 and studied graphic arts at the University of Mississippi. Today, he owns a successful photography studio here in Red Bay. Jane and Scotty have been instrumental in establishing and expanding the Red Bay Museum on Main Street. Our roundtable brought out some interesting and amusing recollections about Red Bay in the decade when Tiffin Motorhomes began.



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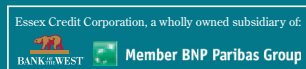
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Liz Jones

DETAILS, DETAILS

Liz Jones has worked at Tiffin Motorhomes almost 13 years. She works behind the scenes making sure recalls and warranty issues are handled correctly. “I am the department supervisor for the Warranty Input/Recalls department,” Liz explained. “My department puts all the warranty claims into the Tiffin system, passes them on for approval, then makes sure the check is written. We also take care of the paperwork involved with the Tiffin recalls and service bulletins.”

With such a detailed job, Liz is happy for any leisure time she can get. “I enjoy scrapbooking and photography and I do write in my spare time,” she shared. “I have written Sunday School literature for children and have had a few articles published. Another hobby I enjoy is cooking and trying new recipes. I love looking through cookbooks. Some of my co-workers and I have found a web site we really like, www.southernplate.com by Christy Jordan. We are always comparing who tried what and how good it was,” she continued. “We were fortunate enough to attend one of Christy’s local cooking shows and we had a great time.”

Liz and her husband Mike have one daughter, Abby, who is ten years old and in the fifth grade. “My husband and I have been married for 24 years. Mike is a financial advisor for Edward Jones. We are active in church and stay busy with Abby’s basketball team in the winter months. Alabama football is something else we enjoy as a family. I like Alabama football but Mike and Abby are fanatics. Last year we attended A-Day, the spring scrimmage game, and I took a book to read. Abby was dismayed and kept telling me to hide it in the program because “nobody reads a book at an Alabama ballgame!”



Bill Brown

MOTORHOME DELIVERY

Have you ever wondered just who the people are who deliver your motorhome to the dealership? While many of our customers and visitors enjoy getting to meet the assembly line workers and office personnel at Tiffin, rarely are the delivery drivers in the spotlight. They are responsible for getting motorhomes delivered safely to the dealer. If anything sounds or looks amiss during the delivery process, they are sure to get it taken care of before the coach arrives.

Bill Brown began delivering motorhomes for Tiffin in 1978. Except for a brief five-year hiatus, he has been driving motorhomes to dealers nonstop since 1985. “Well, I used to see all the drivers delivering and thought it was something I’d like to do,” Bill recalled. “So I came to see Johnny Hargett, the sales manager at the time, and checked on a job.”

Since Tiffin Motorhomes has dealers across the United States and Canada, Bill has had opportunities to see much of our beautiful country. An antique car aficionado, he also checks out car shows in the area where he’s making a delivery. “Old cars are my hobby,” Bill stated. “I’ve got three and I enjoy going to car shows throughout the country when I finish delivering a motorhome if it’s possible.”

“The best part about my job is getting to see the country,” he enthused. “Some of my favorite trips involve going out West and to the Northwest,” he shared.

Bill moved to Red Bay in 1960. He and his wife Kathy have one son Michael.

The next time you are at a dealership and see a fine Tiffin product on display it might just be one that Bill Brown has delivered!



Glenda Timbs

MASTER CAKE DECORATOR

Glenda Timbs has been with Tiffin Motorhomes since 2006. “I am in the engineering bill of materials (BOM) department,” Glenda explained. “I view this as the hub of communication among sales, purchasing, engineering, production, parts and service, information technology, and warranty. I also assist in maintaining new parts set up and bill of materials for each coach.”

Outside of work, Glenda has been cultivating a hobby of cake decorating that began in 9th grade. “I saw a cake that someone had made and was so captivated. I just had to make a cake for my parents’ 25th anniversary,” Glenda recalled. “So, I enrolled in the Home Economics class at Tishomingo County Vocational Center. My first cake was three-tiered and I brought it home on the school bus so I wouldn’t spoil the surprise for my parents.”

“I remember one time I was to make and deliver a friend’s wedding cake to Memphis. It was raining, the power was on and off, and just as we arrived in Memphis, we were rear-ended by another vehicle and the cake was destroyed. With no supplies, I got resourceful and went to the Mall of Memphis where I borrowed the stove in their reception area. I mixed the batter, made my icing, and presented my friend with her tiered wedding cake supported only by wine glasses.”

When she’s not decorating cakes, Glenda and her dog, Rico, can often be found socializing at the Allegro Service Center campground. “Most people know me because of Rico, my 125 pound Great Dane. Often you will find us at the park or walking around town.”

The next time you’re staying at the Allegro Service Center, keep an eye out for Glenda and Rico—they just may be making their rounds!

Editor’s Note: After earning a B.S. degree in professional writing from the University of North Alabama, Stephanie Umfress began working in the sales department at TMH in May 2005. She writes and edits the owner manuals for all six brands, answers emails coming in over the website, and assists in sales administration. Born in the Philippines, she has lived most of her life in Red Bay.

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The 2012 Allegro Bus 43 QGP

Is It the Right Coach for You?

Over the last two years, Robert and Mary Lou Marshall have spent many hours with long-time friends, Jack and Bonnie Smelser, who are full-timers in their 2009 Allegro Bus 40 QXP. Robert and Mary Lou are fascinated with the Smelser's lifestyle and are on the brink of making a decision to buy a motorhome. They both retired from full-time careers earlier this summer—Robert, a draftsman for a commercial building contractor, and Mary Lou, a loan officer at a credit union. They have three children and seven grandchildren in far-flung locations around the country.

Jack located a dealer with a good inventory of Tiffin motorhomes, including several Allegro Buses and Phaetons. He wanted the Marshalls to start their search at the top and asked the sales representative to show them a 43-foot Allegro Bus which had just come in a few days earlier. "Stepping into this 2012 Allegro Bus 43 QGP will be like visiting a house you might be interesting in buying," Jack advised his friends.

Robert's quick response surprised Jack because he had already been thinking along those lines. "When I visit a beautiful home, I appreciate the perfection of fine woodworking in the flooring, cabinets, baseboards and crown molding; handsome fabrics and wallpaper; effective and creative lighting; window treatments; kitchens and bathrooms where the interior decorator was generous with ceramic flooring, artistic tile backsplashes, and solid surface countertops as well as high quality plumbing fixtures.

"I also will look for plenty of storage solutions: places to or-

ganize and store my tools, books, and CDs," Robert continued.

"I'm going to need a lot more closet space than you need, Robert. So let's keep that in mind," Mary Lou said pointedly.

"What about bed choices for the master bedroom? How about our overnight guests? Will there be an area to use my laptop and leave it set up like I do now?" Robert asked. Jack didn't expect so many questions during the trip to the dealership. Bonnie was battling a cold, and couldn't come along to help.

"Although we may be eating out frequently, I still want plenty of countertop space to prepare meals. I need time to assess the cooking area, pantry and storage, and refrigerator. I know I have to get used to the idea of not taking along *everything* from my home kitchen," Mary Lou said.

"I am interested in the quality of the electronics," Robert continued. "Did they do a good job designing the entertainment system? I am not completely into the idea yet that this 'house' we are visiting is already fully furnished. I have a very comfortable recliner in our den that I am going to be giving up every time we travel."

"Jack, just like you and Bonnie, we love to have people over," Mary Lou noted. "We have to find a floorplan that is accommodating for entertaining and having our kids over when we're near them."

"That was one of our shopping points, too," Jack responded. "We have entertained as many as six at one time."

"I have plenty of attic storage in our house," Robert pointed

Text by Fred Thompson

Photography by Constellation Imageworks

out. “But this ‘house’ has no attic. So let’s check out the basement. Is there really a lot of storage there?”

“Just like our 40 QXP, only a little larger,” Jack answered.

After a two-hour drive, Jack pulled into the dealership. Joe Smithson, the sales consultant, met Jack, Robert, and Mary Lou at the entrance to the showroom and welcomed them to the dealership. Jack had made the appointment the day before. Joe listened carefully to a condensed replay of the conversation the Marshalls had just had with Jack during their drive.

The Marshalls’ purpose for buying a motorhome was familiar. They wanted to be closer to their children and grandchildren who could only come and visit on the major holidays. “We would like to be near each family for two or three weeks at a time, almost like we were next door, so they could come over and visit and vice-versa,” Mary Lou said. “We want to be closer to our grandchildren as they grow up. Have them over to spend the night on the weekends, take them to a park, rent a movie and make popcorn. We can babysit while their parents take a vacation or go to a professional meeting. Just be there for them!”

“I’ve got woodworking tools I want to carry with us to show the kids how to make things, and Mary Lou would like to teach our granddaughters how to sew,” Robert added. “So having some cargo space is really important.”

“Anything else?” Joe asked. “Well, yes,” Robert said. “During our careers and raising the family, we took the usual one- and two-week vacations to the beach or to the mountains. But we never really got to see this country. So I think we would like to do some long trips out west, the northeast, maybe Canada.”

“If we could really get used to the idea of living in it for a long stretch, I think I might like to follow Jack and Bonnie to South Texas for the winter,” Mary Lou added. “We’re still not sure about full-timing.”

The big picture was taking shape and the consultant winked at Jack. “I would like to show you the Tiffin Allegro Bus. I think the 43 QGP may be what you are looking for.”

The dealership had just staged the coach for a show that was beginning on Friday. It couldn’t have looked more inviting. The Marshalls were impressed with the expansive daytime living area when they stepped into what might become their second home.

The living room, dining area, and galley from the front entry to the mid-section television measures 22’4” by 12’4”, with the front slide-outs deployed, Joe noted as they entered the coach. Over 71 square feet of glass make the daytime living areas light and airy, bringing the outside in. But if the sun gets too bright, a single control panel can lower the solar screens with touch programming. The windshield and side cockpit windows can also be solar screened with toggle switches. The same controls will lower the opaque privacy shades.

For 2012 the Allegro Bus features a new window design. The exterior full-body paint now includes the window frames, rendering them nearly invisible. The tinted flat-panel windows open easily with a thumb latch in a vertical handle. There is no visible window structure—only the tinted, flat-panel glass shows.

The living room seating for the 43 QGP invites seven to enjoy the comfort of Ultraleather® in the two optional recliners and the optional air coil hide-a-bed sofa. Both the driver and passenger chairs rotate easily into the living room conversation area. If the Marshalls’ grandchildren come for an overnight visit, the hide-a-bed makes into a full 60 × 80 queen-size bed. It is also a worthy resting place for two adults.

According to Jack, Robert is a very good woodworker in his own right. He seemed to be in a slight “state of awe” as he walked the perimeter of the living area, rubbing his fingers over the smooth finishes and gazing closely at the raised panel doors, the double





crown moldings, the recessed drawer facings, and the valances.

Next on Mary Lou's list was a close investigation of the galley (she was still calling it a "kitchen"). Joe pointed out to her that the galley's solid surface countertop provided 23 square feet of workspace. Mary Lou noticed the finished edge of the countertop, designed with a slight lip to prevent spills from running off on the floor. She was surprised when Joe pulled on the cabinet slide-out, turning the galley into a convenient L-shaped workspace with several more square feet of solid surface countertop. In the galley slide-out, Mary Lou found a stack of three drawers, each 13 × 26 inches, and there were still a few more surprises.

*An induction coil in the cook-top heats the iron base of cookware. Copper-bottomed pans, aluminum pans and other non-ferrous pans are generally unsuitable. The heat induced in the base is transferred to the food via conduction. Benefits of induction cookers include efficiency, safety (the induction cook-top is not heated itself), and speed.

This 43QGP has the "all electric" option (MSRP \$1,120). There is no LP tank on this coach. Schott's CERAN® glass-ceramic cooktop which operates on the principle of induction heating* comes with a complete set of cookware, made just for this technology. Above the cooktop, TMH chose a residential size convection/microwave oven, including all of the cooking options and exterior venting. The galley area is also served with a 3-speed Fan-Tastic Vent with a color-coded thermostat. In the daytime, it can quickly exhaust hot air and in the evening it can serve as an attic fan to bring in cool breezes.

The Fisher & Paykel dishwasher just under the cooktop makes a quick job of clean-up after a meal. And just under the dishwasher is your pots-n-pans storage drawer.

The coach's 22-cubic foot residential refrigerator is standard equipment. The design with the freezer drawer at the bottom and two doors for the refrigerator on top gives the chef easy ac-





cess to everything. Of course, the unit includes a large ice maker and a cold water tap. This 43 QGP has an optional freezer in the basement on the passenger side.

Galley storage is a strong suit for Tiffin coaches. To the right and left of the convection/microwave oven, the designers placed two large cabinets, one 6.7 and the other 5.3 cubic feet in volume. Each has a slide-out shelf to make access easier.

The residential-size double stainless steel sink has a single-lever, button-controlled faucet and extendable sprayer. Underneath the sink, Tiffin designers planned for big items with 6.3 cubic feet of storage space: trash can, cleaning supplies, and large countertop appliances which have to be stored for travel. Just to the right, another stack of three drawers takes care of small galley items.

Since both Robert and Mary Lou are concerned about storage in the living area, Joe pointed out that the 43 QGP has 59

storage doors and 26 drawers. In the living-dining area, the six-door compartment above the passenger side sofa hides 14 cubic feet of storage. On the driver's side above the recliners and dinette, 12 doors conceal about 11 cubic feet.

Your household's business affairs need a home, too. One side of the optional freestanding dinette's credenza-like cabinet houses a computer station with trays for a keyboard and printer. The other side has a filing cabinet and office-size drawers. The top of the credenza, which is an 18 × 72-inch solid surface countertop, and the dining table, 25 × 40 inches, provide an exceptional space for office work, crafts, or spreading a beautiful buffet dinner for your guests.

With his background in construction, Robert was favorably impressed with the materials used in the 43 QGP: Ultraleather™; ceramic floors with marble patterns; complementary fabric selection and beautiful detail in the valances, pillows, and bed com-





forter; and handsome hardware selections for the cabinets and water fixtures. He did not overlook the efficiency and long-life of LED lighting. Joe really got Robert's attention when he explained that Tiffin only offered solid cherry in the Allegro Bus — finished six different ways! Cherry Wood, Natural Cherry, Glazed Cordovan, Glazed Cherry, Glazed Honey, and White Chocolate (bath only). All of Tiffin's cabinets, fascias, and crown moldings are handcrafted in the Red Bay mill shop. All interior décor is designed in the California studios of Margaret Mia, he noted.

On their trip to the dealership, Robert had emphasized that a top-quality entertainment system was very important to him. Joe explained that the entire coach is designed for entertainment. When you are dining, the person facing the rear of the coach can watch programming on the 37-inch mid-ship, eye-level unit. The person facing forward will view the 37-inch above-dash television. Either TV is the right choice for an evening movie when you are stretched out on the recliners or sofa. Or you might want to crawl into bed and watch a movie on your 32-inch TV, pre-wired for a separate DVD player. All four televisions are standard equipment on the 43 QGP.

The surround sound system and the coach's television technology were designed exclusively for Tiffin coaches by Triple H Electronics in Red Bay. The system uses component audio-video cables to distribute input/output data from a central, easily serviced black box (mounted under the floor). The box receives high definition broadcast *input* from the standard in-motion, low profile satellite dish which can pull programming from network satellites while you are traveling. Additional *input* comes from (1) an enclosed rotating digital TV antenna receiving local programming, (2) HD programming via cable service, and (3) a 5-disc DVD-CD player with high quality picture and digital sound technology. The system transmits *output* to the coach's HD-ready Panasonic televisions and sound equipment. All of the described system is standard on the 2012 Allegro Bus 43 QGP.

From any of the four televisions in the coach, one click on the remote activates a selection screen which presents "TV, DVD, and SATELLITE." Your selection will source *input* for (1) standard television reception from the digital antenna or cable, (2) satellite reception (DIRECTV or DISH which you purchase separately), or (3) DVD-CD (movies or music) from the standard Panasonic 5-disc player. The Panasonic DVD unit converts standard disks to high-def. The system is also equipped with a cradle for iPod devices, allowing you to play your own music collection through the coach's surround sound. With the optional satellite radio and a subscription to XM, owners can also enjoy their music channels in surround sound.

Coaches can be divided into two main sections, Joe explained to the Marshalls: daytime and nighttime. In space allocation, the breakdown is usually about 60–40. Owners love their creature comforts in a high-end coach and Tiffin follows through in the bath and a half and the luxurious bedroom.

The daytime and nighttime sections in the 43 QGP are separated by two functional areas. On the driver side, the optional

Splendide stacked washer/dryer is concealed in a handsome cabinet with vented solid cherry doors. Of course, the dryer is vented to the outside as it would be in your home. On the passenger side, the half bath is located conveniently for guests. When it's just the two of you, getting ready in the morning or dressing for an evening out can be accomplished a lot faster with two bath areas. The half bath has theater lighting for the mirrored wall cabinet and LED bulbs in the lights recessed into the ceiling. The handsome vanity with a handmade backsplash and solid surface countertop has a stack of three drawers next to a cabinet for bath supplies. Of course, a half bath can also be called "the library" and this one has a nice magazine rack. A Fan-Tastic vent is standard equipment.

The Allegro Bus offers four interior décor and fabric suites: Creme Brulée, Tour de France, Milan, and Interior Fabrics by Ralph Lauren. The three rows of individually designed pillows stacked high on the bed, the solid cherry headboard with wrought iron inserts, and the fabric selections in the luxurious comforter elevate the master suite to a new level in the 2012 edition. The four door storage area over the headboard offers nearly 12 cubic feet of storage. Small windows in both sidewalls of the bed slide-out will provide pleasant ventilation at night. The ceiling fan with two speeds is controlled with a switch in the nightstand. The pillowtop queen or king bedding is standard. The Marshalls were pleased that two optional choices are available: the Select Comfort's Sleep Number mattress (queen or king) and Amerisleep's Memory Foam mattress (queen or king).

The passenger side slide-out provides a chest of drawers and an entertainment center for the master suite. The two-door cabinet over the window has 3.2 cubic feet of space. Directly under the window, a chest with an 11 × 38-inch solid surface countertop offers four large drawers. Under the 32-inch television which is mounted in the top corner of the slide-out, a taller chest has a compartment with wiring and cables for a second satellite receiver and a DVD player. A large drawer and a clothes hamper occupy the lower part of the chest.

Two heavy sliding doors with translucent glass panels separate the bedroom from the rear bath and the forward section of the coach, ensuring its privacy.

The rear bath and closet expand across the full width of the coach and extend out 7'2". The closet is 96 inches wide and 23 inches deep. A safe installed on the back wall of the closet has become a popular option. On the passenger side, the double lavatory vanity with a 47 × 32.5-inch mirror and barrel lighting has a stack of four drawers and a large storage cabinet under each lavatory. A maserator toilet and a 41-inch elliptical shower occupy the opposite wall. The shower's skylight can be insulated in colder weather with a sliding ceiling panel. The deluxe shower head handle has pushbutton control for water management.

Joe saved the best feature for last. As *standard* equipment, the Allegro Bus 43 QGP features Aqua-Hot, an endless, on demand hot water system and a hydronic heating system. The system uses diesel fuel from the coach's 150-gallon tank. Aqua-Hot

has a closed fluid system heated by a diesel burner. The fluid is pumped to heat exchangers throughout the coach which blow moist, warmed air.

Mary Lou was ready to sign on the dotted line, but Robert with his construction instincts wanted to explore the infrastructure and talk about some of the "out-of-sight" technology.

An optional 125-watt solar panel on the roof trickle charges the six house batteries during the day, supplying "free power" to the coach's 12-volt lights, the water pump, and the HVAC thermostats. Included as standard equipment on the 43 QGP, heat pumps will warm the coach even when outside temps are in the mid-thirties. An optional basement freezer adds another four cubic feet to your frozen foods capacity.

Robert found a willing teacher when he asked Joe about what was behind all of those storage doors. He got the grand tour. Tiffin makes the best use, Joe said, of the space under your floor. Those doors conceal huge lighted and heated cargo areas. Starting on the passenger side at the entry door, the first compartment offers 30 cubic feet of conveniently located storage space. The second and third doors access approximately 90 cubic feet of storage space. However, many owners opt for one or two optional slide-out trays for easier access to items in the mid-section of the bay. While the tray increases convenience, it reduces the storage space by about 15 cubic feet. This coach has one slide-out tray and uses part of the second bay for the optional basement freezer.

Robert noted that the solid, side-opening storage doors have full-length hinges that prevent any sag. On the inside, the thick cast aluminum doors have a 1-inch aluminum encasement for insulation and the electro-mechanical locking system. Like a fine car, the doors have a nice, solid sound when you open and close them.

The fourth compartment provides access to the Aqua-Hot hydronic heating and hot water system. Since the unit is located in the middle of the pass-through area, it leaves approximately eight cubic feet of storage space on each side. But it is important to leave plenty of air space around the unit. The fifth door conceals the DEF tank (the additive that cleans up emissions) and has a mounting board for the customer air supply and bleeder lines for the water system.

The last door on the passenger side is a well-labeled electrical center for relays, solenoids, and breakers. It's a key location for troubleshooting when you are checking out your electrical systems. The chassis batteries are here, too.

A large vented door in the rear cap lifts out of the way with air shocks for the owner to make regular checks on the engine and transmission oil, the hydraulic fluid, and the filter minder.

Walking from the rear of the coach forward on the driver side, Joe continued to explain the infrastructure to Robert. At the rear corner, a small door hides the 40-feet of 50-amp line to hook the coach into shore power. A powered reel retracts the line.

The first large door conceals the lighted utility cabinet, a place where Tiffin's good design and engineering really shows. Every functional connection and switch is clearly labeled. A

digital display shows how much is in each wet tank. The water filter can be changed quickly and the water supply hose is on a retractable reel. Both the black and gray tanks have 3.5-inch valves for quick dumping after dry camping. With the outside shower, plus soap and paper towel dispensers, clean-up is easy.

The second door provides access to several service points on the Aqua-Hot system as well as the central vacuum cleaner unit. The third and fourth doors are the opposite sides of the 90 cubic feet of pass-through storage. The slide-out tray will also extend on this side.

The fifth compartment houses the six coach batteries, necessary for the operation of the residential refrigerator in the galley. If the motorhome is parked during the day without shore power (such as a visit to Disney World), the Magnum inverter will automatically crank the generator when the batteries' reserve power gets too low. Simultaneously, the genset will recharge the batteries and put the entire coach on 110-volt operation. If it is a hot day, you can leave your generator running to keep the coach cool.

The HWH system in the sixth compartment provides the hydraulic power for the jacks and two of the slide-out mechanisms. The system requires very little maintenance, except for checking the oil. On the front corner of the coach, the seventh compartment houses another electrical nerve center (fuses, relays, etc.), plus a second customer air outlet and the windshield wash fluid reservoir. Behind the front cap is the slide-out for the 10K Onan generator. Like any diesel engine, periodic checking of the coolant and oil is necessary.

Organization is the key to setting up a first-class maintenance program. Tiffin's excellent organization of the coach's infrastructure makes the owner's job easy.

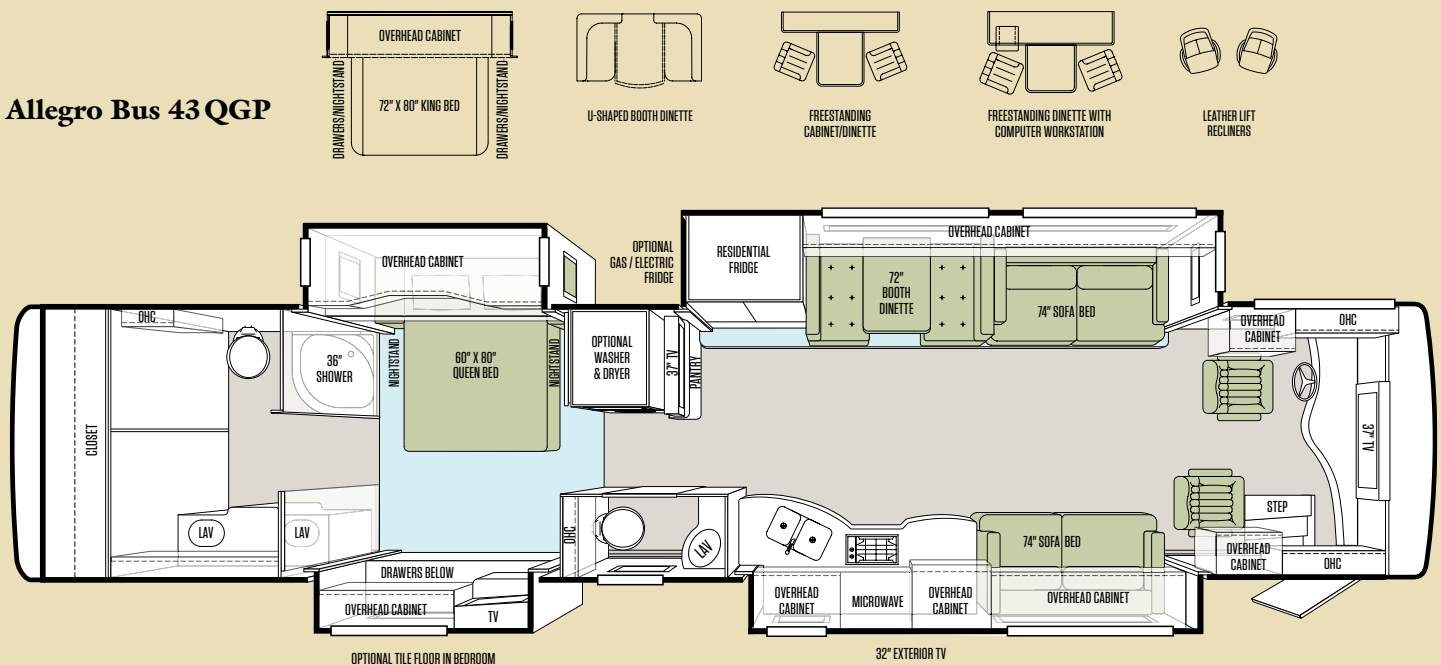
Two-and-a-half hours ago, Robert and Mary Lou Marshall and Joe, our very capable sales consultant who knew the 43 QGP inside out, began a long dialog about a great coach. Now it is time to take the unit for a test ride. Robert did not feel he was ready to drive a 43-foot motorhome, so Joe took the driver's seat, Robert the passenger's chair, and Mary Lou strapped herself into the passenger side sofa. Their ride began with a solid and smooth surge onto the four-lane highway in front of the dealership. The coach moved with authority into the passing lane and glided past a UPS 18-wheeler. As Joe talked about the 450-hp Cummins diesel, the Allison transmission, the Michelin tires, and the braking systems, Robert and Mary Lou were noticing the quietness inside the coach. Joe signaled for a right turn and headed down the ramp to the interstate. Mary Lou leaned forward to enjoy the panorama on the horizon.

As the coach reached the interstate speed limit, Joe put it on cruise control and leaned back into the luxurious driver's chair. Robert noticed and followed suit.

"We have about 12 miles to go before we arrive at our reserved lake site at the resort," he announced. "We will be having a catered lunch on the patio." Robert and Mary Lou were surprised to receive such royal treatment. The trip to the resort was pleasant—blue skies with a light wind. "This is how RVing should be," Joe smiled.

With encouragement from Joe and a little coaching, Robert drove the 43 QGP back to the dealership and was surprised at how easily it handled. "If you decide to buy this coach," Joe explained, "you will receive two full days of training on-site in the operation of the coach. Then we will give you two days of driver training." Two days later the 2012 Allegro Bus 43 QGP was titled to Robert and Mary Lou Marshall. **RIS**

Allegro Bus 43 QGP



SPECIFICATIONS: Model tested 2012 Allegro Bus 43 QGP, Quad Slide, Base MSRP* – \$372,400. MSRP as tested with options – \$405,517.

STANDARD FEATURES

Structural

Laminated floor, sidewall, and roof
Steel/aluminum reinforced structure
Full one-piece molded fiberglass roof cap

Automotive

The Tiffin Powerglide™ chassis
Allison 3000 MH electronic 6-speed automatic transmission with two overdrives and lock-up (torque converter)
Cummins ISL 450-hp electronic/turbocharged diesel
1,250 lbs.-ft. torque @ 1,300 rpm
Side-mounted radiator
Two-stage compression engine brake
Air brakes with automatic slack adjusters and ABS
Aluminum wheels
Six air bags
Emergency start switch
Cruise control
Adjustable gas & brake pedals
Tilt steering column
Independent front suspension
Fog lights

Exterior

Fiberglass front and rear caps
Dual fuel fills
BASF full body paint with front cap protective film
Large one-piece tinted windshield
Heated chrome power mirrors with remote adjustments
Single motor intermittent wipers
Undercoating
Daytime running lights
30-inch wide entry door with deadbolt
Lighted keyless entry door system & keyless component door locks
Double electric step
Hydraulic automated leveling jacks
Auto generator start
Dual pane tinted windows
Amber patio light on driver's side
Exterior patio light on passenger's side
Exterior 32" TV with sound bar, mounted in slide-out wall
Automatic door & patio awnings
Window awning package
Slide-out awnings with metal-wrapped covers
Pass-through basement storage
Auto-lockable, swing-out exterior storage doors with gas shocks
Heated water and holding tank compartments
Docking lights
Six house batteries
Onan 10,000 Kw generator with 3 low-profile ACs with heat pumps
2000 watt inverter
Custom mud flap
50-amp service
Power cord reel, 50-amp
Park telephone & cable ready
Black holding tank flush system
SeeLevel tank monitor located at dump station
110v exterior receptacle
Water filter
Exterior rinse hose with soap dispenser & paper towel holder
Spotlight with remote
Concealed air horn
Low profile in-motion satellite dish
Digital TV antenna
Magnum sine wave inverter
Power Fantastic® roof vent with 3-speed fan in galley
Two Fantastic® roof vents with 3-speed fans in bath areas
Roof ladder
Color back-up camera
Two side cameras activated with turn signal
Quiet AC roof-ducted system
Luggage compartment lights
Driver's Compartment
37" front overhead TV

18" VIP Smart steering wheel
Drawer in step well
ITC courtesy light in stepwell
12v disconnect switch
Lighted instrument panel
Adjustable fuel/brake pedals
Adjustable seatbelt brackets
Flexsteel® 8-way power driver's seat with Ultra-leather™
Flexsteel® 8-way power passenger's seat with Ultra-leather™ and power footrest
Passenger seat console box with built-in magazine rack
Color in-dash monitor for rear and sideview cameras activated by turn signals
Contemporary wrap-around dash with glare reduction
Lighted switches
Power solar/privacy full-width windshield shades
Power solar/privacy shades for driver & passenger side windows
Single CD player & AM-FM stereo
Fire extinguisher
Dual dash fans
Computer drawer in dash with storage compartment and lock-out rails (PS)
12v, 110v, & phone jack receptacles
Beverage tray

Living area/dinette

Booth dinette with solid surface table top
12v & 110v receptacles, park ready phone jack at dinette
Full ceramic tile floor in living area, half-bath, & rear bath
37" flat screen color television wall-mounted in entertainment center
37" dash overhead TV
74" Ultra-leather™ DE sofa/sleeper (PS)
74" cloth DE sofa/sleeper (DS & PS)

Kitchen

Polished solid surface countertops
Solid surface covers for sink and cooktop
Expand-an-island
LED lights above countertop
2½-inch deep lighted toe kick
Single lever sink faucet with built-in sprayer
Residential double bowl stainless steel sink
Residential stainless steel refrigerator with icemaker (6 batteries)
Stainless steel convection microwave oven with exterior venting
2-burner gas-on-glass cooktop with convection/microwave oven
One 3-speed Fan-Tastic® fan
Galley soap dispenser
Storage racks for covers in cabinet under sink
Cherry wood cabinets
Natural cherry wood cabinets

Rear Bath

Skylight in shower with sliding insulation cover
Solid surface vanity top with two lavatories
Curved shower enclosure with doors on track
41" molded elliptical fiberglass shower
Electric maserator toilet with OH cabinet
One 3-speed Fan-Tastic® fan
Double wardrobe with automatic lights & mirrored doors

Half Bath

Cabinet with mirrored door & vanity lights
Electric toilet with spray
Solid surface vanity top and bowl
One 3-speed Fan-Tastic® fan
Magazine rack

Bedroom

Innerspring pillow-top queen mattress (60" x 80")
Bed comforter with throw pillows
Solid wood and wrought iron headboard
Wall-to-wall carpeting
Solid surface nightstand tops
Solar/privacy shades
TV pre-wired for DVD-CD player & satellite receiver

Laundry hamper
32" flat panel color television
Ceiling fan
Carbon monoxide detector
LP leak detector

General Interior

7-foot ceilings with LED bullet lights
Soft touch vinyl ceiling
High gloss raised panel cabinet doors
Storage cabinet washer/dryer ready
Adjustable shelving in some cabinets
Enclosed surround sound speakers
SeeLevel tank monitor
Hydronic heating system
Carbon monoxide, smoke, and LP leak detectors
Central vacuum system with VacPan
Multiplex lighting system
Air-driven step well cover
Energy management system
Power solar and privacy shades on all windows in forward section
Manual privacy shade at galley window
Manual solar and privacy shades in bedroom
Manual privacy shade only in bath and half bath
Ceramic tile flooring in kitchen, bath, entrance landing, and living room
Complete cable wiring interfacing with surround sound and satellite receiver
Enclosed surround sound speakers

OPTIONAL FEATURES ON THIS COACH

Glazed honey natural cherry wood cabinets
All electric coach
Basement freezer
Ceramic tile in bedroom
Solar panel (125 watt)
One slide-out storage tray
Safe located in rear bath wardrobe
Satellite-ready radio (requires subscription)
Rear view mirror with compass and outside temp
In-dash navigational system
Dishwasher, drawer type
Stacked washer and dryer
Free standing dinette with computer workstation
74" Ultra-leather™ air coil hide-a-bed sofa/sleeper (PS)
Two leather lift recliners (DS)
Two Paramount awnings with housings to conceal roof ACs & antenna
Dual control bed system (Select Comfort), king

OTHER OPTIONAL FEATURES AVAILABLE

PASSENGER'S SIDE

74" Cloth air coil hide-a-bed sofa/sleeper
74" Ultra-leather™ air coil hide-a-bed sofa/sleeper
74" Cloth DE sofa/sleeper

DRIVER'S SIDE

74" Ultra-leather™ DE sofa/sleeper
74" Cloth DE sofa/sleeper
74" Ultra-leather™ air coil hide-a-bed sofa/sleeper
74" Cloth air coil hide-a-bed sofa/sleeper
74" Ultra-leather™ magic bed
74" Cloth magic bed
Sofa/booth dinette combination, cloth
Sofa/booth dinette combination, Ultra-leather

Second slide-out tray in storage compartment
Innerspring pillowtop king mattress (72" x 80")
Dual control bed system (Select Comfort), queen
Memory foam mattress, queen
Memory foam mattress, king
Combo washer/dryer with OH storage
One Paramount awning with housing to conceal roof ACs and antenna
Glazed cordovan wood interior cabinets
Glazed cherry wood interior cabinets
Glazed rear bath cabinets with white chocolate
Prewire for Winegard Traveler Satellite
Tankless gas water heater
Oven with convection microwave
Free standing dinette with built-in cabinets
3-burner cooktop with gas oven

MEASUREMENTS

Wheelbase – 294"
Overall length – 43' 6"
Overall height with roof air – 12' 7"
Interior height – 84"
Overall width – 101"
Interior width – 96"

WEIGHTS & CAPACITIES

GVWR – 49,900 lb.
Front GAWR – 15,600 lb.
Rear GAWR – 22,000 lb.
Tag Axle GAWR – 12,300 lb.
GCWR – 59,900 lb.
UVW – 34,930 lb.
CCC – 13,525 lb.
Trailer hitch capacity – 10,000 lb.

POWER TRAIN

Engine – Cummins ISL 8.9-liter 450-hp electronic diesel
Torque – 1,250 lb.-ft. @ 1,300 rpm
Transmission – Allison electronic 3000 MH 6-speed automatic with 2 overdrives
Tire Size – 295/80R 22.5 XZA 2RH
Alternator – Leece-Neville 170 amps

CHASSIS

Frame – Powerglide™ chassis
Frame design – Raised rail
Anti-locking braking system – (front) Bendix ADB225 17" vented air disc (rear) Bendix/Spicer 16.5" x 7" drum
Suspension (front) – BF RL77EM IFS – custom tuned (air)
Suspension (rear) – Tuthill RD 2300 – custom tuned (air)
Shock absorbers – Sachs front/Bilstein rear – custom tuned
Leveling jacks – HWH hydraulic

CONSTRUCTION

Body – Laminated floor, sidewalls, roof
Roof – One-piece fiberglass
Support – Steel/aluminum reinforced structure
Front/rear body panels – One-piece fiberglass caps
Exterior side panels – Gel-coat fiberglass with full body paint

ACCOMMODATIONS

Sleeps – Four adults
Fuel tank – 150 gallons
Freshwater – 90 gallons
Black water – 80 gallons
Grey water – 70 gallons
LPG tank – (35 gallons; can be filled to 80% capacity)

MSRP*

MSRP is the manufacturer's suggested retail price and does not include dealer prep or options. Manufacturer reserves the right to change or discontinue models offered, standard features, optional equipment, and prices without prior notice. Dealer prices may vary.

UVW

This is the approximate weight of the vehicle with a full fuel tank, engine oil, and coolants. The UVW does not include cargo, fresh water, LP gas, passengers, or dealer-installed accessories.

DEALERS

To locate the Tiffin dealer nearest you, go to www.tiffinmotorhomes.com and click on "dealer locator." If internet access is not available, call 256-356-8661 and ask the operator for the Tiffin dealer location nearest to you.

PLEASE NOTE

All options may not be available on all models. Because of progressive improvements made in a model year, specifications and standard and optional equipment are subject to change without notice or obligation.

Interviews from Fort Myers Beach, Florida



Normand Munger & Chantale Boucher

Hometown: Quebec City, Canada
Fort Myers Beach, Florida

- Normand and Chantale enjoy traveling with Caravane Horizon-Lussier. Their next trip will last 132 days and will cover about 10,000 miles.
- After interviewing these three Tiffin RV couples from Canada at the Gulf Air RV Park in FL they all enthusiastically introduced me to Doctor Jean-Guy Dufour and his wife Lorraine. Dr. Dufour is both their 'Caravane' Doctor and Chief Wagonmaster.
- Normand and Chantale own a 2007 Allegro Open Road 33 ft. with a Ford chassis and V10.
- Future plans are to purchase an Allegro Red.
- They've been married for 37 years.
- In 2001 Normand & Chantale began RVing and have had three RVs.
- They travel approximately six months annually.
- Normand does 95% of the driving and prefers driving 350 miles daily.
- They've traveled through two-thirds of the United States, driven 30,400 miles, and prefer Florida.
- Normand and Chantale like meeting people, new cultures, and being in their own home.
- Future destinations include Vancouver, Alaska, Western U.S., and Western Canada.
- Normand's career was in banking and Chantale worked in the Canadian government.
- They retired in 2009. Their hobbies are skiing, skating, biking, and walking.



Yvon & Marcienne Joly

Hometown: Laval, Quebec, Canada
Fort Myers Beach, Florida

- Yvon and Marcienne said, "We travel with Caravane Horizon-Lussier. Yvon is the Group's Tailgunner & Mechanic. The next scheduled trip will stop in 34 cities."
- They own a 2007 Phaeton 40 QSH with a Freightliner chassis and Caterpillar 350.
- They have been married 39 years.
- Yvon & Marcienne's two daughters and four grandchildren live in Laval, Quebec. Cynthea has twin daughters and one son, and Melina has one son.
- Yvon & Marcienne began RVing in 1972.
- This Phaeton is their 10th RV.
- They travel six months each year.
- Yvon drives 100% of the time & prefers to drive 350 miles daily.
- They have driven through two-thirds of the United States and enjoy Arizona and California.
- They've traveled approx. 46,000 miles and want to see Alaska within two years.
- Yvon & Marcienne prefer driving scenic routes and enjoy the freedom of being in their own home all the time.
- Yvon owns a mechanics repair garage.
- His hobbies are travel and mechanics.
- Marcienne had a 25 year administrative career and retired in 2009.
- She is passionate about her two hobbies which are travel and gardening.



Denis & Patricia Dunn

Hometown: Ste-Julienne, Quebec, Canada
Fort Myers Beach, Florida

- Denis and Patricia commented, "We travel with Caravane Horizon-Lussier. The majority of the RVs are Tiffin coaches. We are proud to run & live in our Tiffin coach. Next year we will travel with approx. 45 RV units."
- They own a 2005 Allegro Bus 40 QDP with a Freightliner chassis and Cummins 400.
- They have been married 43 years.
- Denis & Patricia have two daughters and four grand-daughters: Charlene lives in Montreal and has two daughters; Carelle has two daughters and lives in Vancouver.
- Denis and Patricia have been RVing more than 42 years and have owned five different RVs.
- In 2009 they began full-timing.
- Denis drives 100% of the time and prefers to drive 350 to 400 miles a day.
- They've traveled in two-thirds of the U.S., driven over 30,000 miles and enjoy Florida.
- Annually they rendezvous with friends at the Western Festival in St-Tite, Quebec.
- Denis and Patricia enjoy lobster fishing in Maine and salmon fishing in Quebec.
- Denis is a civil engineer. He and Patricia are entrepreneurs and recently opened the Pac Mont Calme RV Park in Ste-Julienne.
- He enjoys photography, music, and plays guitar.
- Patricia enjoys reading and scrabble, and they both like to bike ride.

Editor's Note: Elaine and Mike Austin retired in 2007 at the urging of their children who wanted them to realize their dream: buy a luxury motorhome, go full time, and spend several years just enjoying themselves and seeing the country. After a career turning around failing steel companies, Mike connected with the University of South Alabama as a guest lecturer in their Business Institute. Elaine discovered a whole new career in real estate, selling 105 houses in her best year. They bailed out, bought a new Allegro Bus in March 2008, and "hit the road."



tiffinmotorhomes.com



Put the everyday behind you.
Nothing takes you farther from your worries than the 2012 Allegro.[®]
Because everywhere you go, the industry's best warranty follows.



TIFFIN MOTORHOMES
WHEREVER YOU GO, WE GO.

The Magnificent Hudson River Valley



Text by Fred and Carolyn Thompson

While the mighty Mississippi River is over seven times longer than the Hudson's 306 miles, the Hudson played a larger role in early U.S. history. America's first great trade waterway begins in a little lake called Lake Tear-of-the-Clouds (elev. 4,322 ft.) located in the wilds of the Adirondack Mountains on the slopes of Mt. Marcy.

The river's unique geology made it a navigable waterway for large ships.

About 16,000 years ago a massive ice field gouged the riverbed to a depth significantly below sea level, allowing the tides from the Atlantic Ocean to enter the Hudson. From its mouth at New York City to 150 miles north at Troy, the river's direction of flow actually reverses each day due to the tidal changes. The Mohican people named the river Muhheakantuck, meaning "river that flows both ways." Due to the river's depth and its

reversing flow, large ships can sail up the Hudson 144 miles to Albany, the state's capital.

The river's namesake, Henry Hudson, an Englishman employed by the Dutch East India Company, was the first European to sail up the Hudson River in 1609. No doubt his success in sailing north was assisted by the incoming tides. The river soon became a principal artery for transportation for the colonies in

the 17th and 18th centuries. During the Revolutionary War, the British fought for strategic control of the Hudson but were foiled repeatedly by a gigantic chain stretched across the river just under the water's surface in a narrows at West Point. Many a British captain had the keel of his ship ripped away by the chain, several links of which are still on display on the campus of the United States Military Academy.

For three hundred years, poets, artists, and travel agents often called the Hudson the Rhine of America because its beautiful shores reminded them of Germany's fabled river. During the 1798 outbreak of yellow fever in New York City, Washington Irving's parents sent their 15-year-old son north to live with a friend in Tarrytown. There he discovered Sleepy Hollow, a village with quaint Dutch customs and local ghost stories, where he must have gathered material to write *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, the frightening tales of Ichabod Crane and the headless horseman. When he visited the nearby Catskill Mountains, he found the setting for the story of *Rip Van Winkle*.

A mid-nineteenth century American art movement led by Thomas Cole, an English-born painter, found its subject material in the Hudson River Valley. With great detail and finesse, Cole painted expansive landscapes of canyons, rivers, and untamed beauty with brilliant skies and sunlit highlights.

After the Civil War, the Hudson River offered its woodlands and fertile valleys to some of America's most legendary families, the titans of industry and politics. The Rockefellers, Vanderbilts, Roosevelts, and Livingstons, to name a few, built grand country estates, leaving architectural legacies to the towns that grew up around them.

Today, the gently rolling hills and valleys bordering the river are sprinkled with country manor houses, historic and cultural heritage sites, forts, and art museums. Villages like New Paltz with its Huguenot church and cemetery, stone houses, narrow streets, shops, and eateries will charm you away from the 21st century into a

world that survived without the combustion engine and electricity.

The Hudson River Valley (HRV) touches eight counties on its eastern and western banks, from Troy to Yonkers. The HRV National Heritage Area has divided the river into manageable thirds: the Lower, Middle, and Upper Hudson. To plan your trip through the valley and tailor it to your personal interests, visit their website www.hudsonrivervalley.com Click on "Explore the Heritage," and then "Recommended Itineraries." You will find nine itineraries ready to print: two featuring architecture; four, Revolutionary War; and three, wineries. If you will allow the website to plan your trip to cover a variety of areas, you have two choices: "Absolutely Must See" and "Highly Recommended."

You may also select trips from seven interest areas: architecture; commerce; freedom and dignity; arts, artists, and the Hudson River School; landscapes and gardens; Revolutionary War; and environment. Each of the seven interest areas may be limited by checking one or more of the three regions: Upper Hudson, Middle Hudson, or Lower Hudson.

In October the SUNY Press in Albany will publish Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area: Heritage Site Guidebook [\$9.95. ISBN 978-0-578-05670-8]. The 140-page book in full color will describe your trip options as well as the sites you will visit. An electronic version may be ordered for the same price [ISBN 978-1-4384-4322-5].

We picked "Absolutely Must See" and began our trip in the Lower Hudson region. Then we added a few attractions along the way. So, let's get going!

Kykuit

381 North Broadway, Route 9,
Sleepy Hollow, NY 10591
914-631-3992
GPS: 41.0885918, -73.8616270
Open for tours mid-May to Nov 1;
Wed–Mon; 9–5.

Grand Tour, \$40; Classic Tour, \$23. Buy tickets for Kykuit, Sunnyside, and Lyndhurst at Philipsburg Manor.

One could spend the entire summer visiting, photographing, and appreciating the gardens, architecture, and interior decor of the grand country estates along the Hudson River, which not by accident occupy the best promontories. As a complete package – home, furnishings, art collections, architecture, and gardens – you may agree that Kykuit is the most elaborate and interesting of all.

While Kykuit's classic Greek-Roman architecture is impressive with its six stories, mansard roof, and basement corridors, its interiors are simple, pleasant, and comfortable. John D. Rockefeller, Sr. did not choose the opulence of the gilded age that you might have expected in the home of the founder of Standard Oil. He was heralded during his lifetime (1839–1937) as America's first billionaire. Adjusted for inflation, his wealth was equal to approximately \$664 billion, making him easily the wealthiest man in history.

Rockefeller began purchasing land in the Hudson River Valley in 1893, but his home was not completed in its present form until 1913. The six-story stone mansion was designed and built by Delano & Aldrich, a prominent New York architectural firm who also claimed the Astors, Vanderbilts, and Whitneys as clients.

Designed by Ogden Codman, Jr., the home's interiors feature excellent examples of furniture from the 18th century and fine collections of European and Asian ceramics.

Frederick Law Olmsted, who designed Central Park, was originally retained by Rockefeller for landscaping the 3,500-acre estate. After Olmsted's death in 1903, the grounds were completed by William Welles Bosworth and are considered Bosworth's best work in the United States. He surrounded the terraces and gardens with fountains and pavilions.



RYBINA | DREAMSTIME

Looking out over magnificent views of the Hudson, the original gardens in the Beaux-Arts style still exist, with plantings carefully replaced as needed to maintain his designs and specifications. You will be intrigued and entertained by Bosworth's imaginative variety: a Japanese Garden, a Morning Garden, an Italian Garden, a Japanese brook and tea house, a Temple of Aphrodite, a huge Oceanus fountain, and a semi-circular rose garden. Pundits impressed with the beauty of the gardens have teased, "It's what God Himself would have built, if only He had the money."

Kykuit (pronounced 'Kye-cut, meaning "lookout" in Dutch) became the home to four generations of Rockefellers. JDR, Sr. had four daughters and one son, John D. Rockefeller, Jr. JDR, Jr. had one daughter and five sons whose social, political, and financial finesse may be unparalleled in American families. Nelson, the third child, brought a new dimension to Kykuit. Although his political career as Governor of New York and Vice President of the United States under Gerald Ford overshadowed his astute ability as an art collector, Nelson and his wife, Happy, transformed the basement corridors of the mansion into a museum filled with works of modern art which included Picasso, Chagall, and Warhol. Over a period of 40 years, they added over 130 works of avant garde and modern sculpture.

If you wish to spend more time at

Kykuit, visit the *Coach Barn* which houses a restored collection of horse-drawn carriages and 12 family-owned vintage automobiles, and the *Orangerie* which houses a large variety of citrus plants.

Tours of Kykuit begin at the Visitor Center located at Philipsburg Manor House on Route 9 in Sleepy Hollow. You will be taken by shuttle bus to the estate.

Sunnyside, the home of Washington Irving

West Sunnyside Lane, Route 9,
Tarrytown, NY 10591
914-591-8763
GPS: 41.0473790, -73.8667540
Open for tours Apr–Oct, 9–6, Wed–Mon;
Nov–Dec, 10–4, Sat–Sun.
Admission \$12; 62+, \$10

Washington Irving (1783–1859) is best remembered for two short stories still read by children today: "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" and "Rip Van Winkle," first published in England in 1819–20 as a collection entitled *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* Many consider his opus magnum to be the five-volume biography of George Washington, completed just eight months before Irving's death.

Born to Scottish-English immigrants who were a part of New York City's successful merchant class, Washington was the youngest of 11 children. Born just as the Revolutionary War was ending, his mother named him after General George Washington, whom he met as a child.



Sunnyside

JAKE RAJS

The War of 1812 was devastating for many American merchants, including the Irvings. The family chose their youngest member to go to England in 1815 in an attempt to salvage their business, interrupting briefly Washington's career as an author which had begun pseudonymously in 1802 as Jonathan Oldstyle. Irving continued a successful writing career from England, usually publishing his books simultaneously on both sides of the Atlantic.

Washington Irving and James Fenimore Cooper were the first American authors to win international acclaim. Irving is credited as the first American Man of Letters and the first to earn his living solely as an author. He perfected the short story and wrote simply to entertain rather than to inform. In his stories, he originated the nickname "Gotham" for New York City and invented the expression "the almighty dollar." In a revised edition of *A History of New York*, Irving forever influenced the way Americans celebrate Christmas with a dream sequence he inserted featuring St. Nicholas soaring over treetops in a flying wagon, a perception that later authors would revamp into Santa Claus and a sleigh.

After returning to the U.S. in 1832, Irving bought a small cottage on the Hudson at Tarrytown and began to expand it with whimsical ideas reflected in his writings as well as his interest in the architecture he had admired in Scotland

and Spain. Some observers called it his three-dimensional autobiography.

No architects of renown were retained to assist him. Instead he sought the assistance of his English-born neighbor, George Harvey, considered by many critics to be the earliest flower-specialist painter in America. The grounds began to take on Irving's romantic view of art and nature. The author and the artist landscaped garden paths, trees, shrubs, and water features into natural settings. Irving planted a wisteria vine that still covers the house today. He later wrote, "It is a beautiful spot capable of being made into a little paradise." A curving path takes the visitor across mown pastures perfect for a picnic and through woods that lead to beautiful views of the Hudson. Following the Croton Aqueduct Trail, visitors can hike between Sunnyside and Lyndhurst, home of William Paulding and later Jay Gould.

Dressed in the formal attire of the period, your tour guides will lead you through the home which has been restored to look just as it did in Irving's final years. Sunnyside and many of its furnishings remained in the family, giving today's visitor one of the most authentic experiences of mid-19th century life anywhere in our country. In his time, Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr. said that Sunnyside stood "next to Mount Vernon, the best known and most cherished of all the dwellings in our land."

Irving died of a heart attack at Sunnyside in November 1859. The Irving family continued to use the home until 1945 when it was sold to John D. Rockefeller, Jr., who opened it to the public in 1947.

Lyndhurst

635 South Broadway, Tarrytown,
New York 10591

914-631-4481

GPS: 41.0563471, -73.8612942

Open for tours Mid-Apr–Oct, 10–5, Tue–Sun;

Nov–Mid-Apr, 10–4, Sat–Sun.

Admission: Mansion & grounds \$12, \$11 seniors.

Grounds only \$5

Once called "Paulding's Folly" because of its unusual design, Lyndhurst was designed and built in two stages by Alexander Jackson Davis for William Paulding, a former mayor of New York City. In 1864 he doubled the size of the Gothic Revival house with its unique turrets and segmented façades which appear to be tightly put together like children's building blocks. After adding a four-story tower and a porte cochere for New York businessman George Merritt, Davis also designed Gothic-style furniture for Merritt which was retained by the home's third owner, railroad tycoon and stock manipulator Jay Gould. He purchased the property in 1880 for use as a country house and complemented Davis' furnishings with his own. The mansion remained in the Gould family until 1961 when Gould's daughter, Anna, gave the 67-acre estate to the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Although its rooms are modestly scaled, Lyndhurst's architectural interior is strongly Gothic, almost Medieval, in character. The narrow hallways of Ossining limestone are gloomy. Davis used small, sharply arched windows which seem to be a conscious effort to make the interior dark and somber. In contrast, the ceilings are peaked, vaulted, and ornamented. Strikingly different, the art gallery's two-story ceiling offers much needed light and space.

Landscape architect Ferdinand Mangold established the home's perfectly scaled gardens on land reclaimed from surrounding swamps. His manicured lawns, planted specimen trees now fully



Lyndhurst

BRET MORGAN

matured and majestic, and a conservatory provide today's visitor with an outstanding example of 19th-century landscape design.

Well-informed connoisseurs of the period will appreciate pieces by Herter Brothers and European cabinetmakers, Meissen china, Tiffany lamps, marble statuary, and paintings by Bouguereau, Gerome, and Daubigny. Enjoy relaxing walks through several gardens. You can use your bike on the Croton Aqueduct and Hudson RiverWalk Trails.

Philipsburg Manor Upper Mills

Route 9 (2 miles north of Tappan Zee bridge)
Sleepy Hollow, New York 10591

914-631-3992

GPS: 41.1286920, -73.8616410

Open for tours: Apr–Oct, 10–6, Wed–Mon; Nov–Dec, 10–4, Sat–Sun.

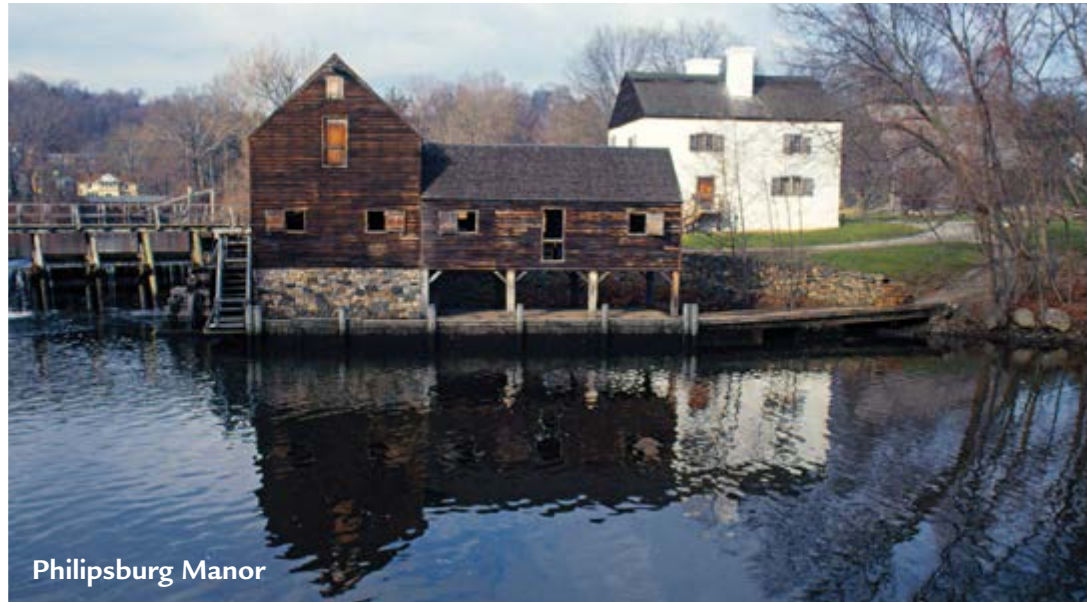
Admission: \$12; \$10 seniors

Originally an English Manor consisting of 52,000 acres (81+ square miles), Philipse Manor was part of a Dutch patroonship which was eventually acquired by Frederick Philipse I through a royal charter. After his death in 1702, the property was divided between his son, Adolph, and grandson, Frederick II, into segments called the Upper and Lower Manors.

The Philipses took advantage of the African slave trade to build gristmills, manor houses, a wharf for shipping, a cooperative building, and a bake house. They were very successful at making the manor a profit-making agricultural venture. Fred-

erick Philipse II reunited the two manors in 1750 and installed his son Frederick III as the third lord of the manor in 1751. In the latter part of the 18th century, tenant farmers from Western Europe were brought in to improve the manor's agricultural productivity, although the family continued to use slave labor. At the beginning of the revolution, the manor's population was nearly 1,000. Frederick Philipse III was one of the largest slaveholders in the northern colonies. As a loyalist, he was arrested for treason in 1779 by New York's revolutionary government and the manor's property was eventually sold at auction to 287 buyers. The Upper Mills, the largest tract of 750 acres which remained intact, passed through several owners until it was acquired by Sleepy Hollow Restorations (now Historic Hudson Valley). Through the philanthropy of John D. Rockefeller Jr., 20 acres have been restored as an 18th century living history museum that focuses on the lives of enslaved Africans. It was renamed Philipsburg Manor Upper Mills.

With interpreters in period costumes to assist, you will stroll through the farm to see historic breeds of oxen, cows, sheep, and chickens. In a visit to the activities center you may participate in shelling beans, working flax into linen, or baking a pan of biscuits in the brick oven. In the gristmill, learn about the skills of an African miller and purchase flour or meal to



Philipsburg Manor

PETER FINGER

take home for your next baking session.

In the 300-year-old manor house, you can touch the reproductions as you visit the kitchen, bedchambers, storage rooms, and parlor. The home was where business and trade was conducted, but also the place for leisure and relaxation. In the Dutch barn you can thresh some wheat or even help milk a cow.

You can easily spend two hours to a half day at Philipsburg Manor, a pastoral setting providing a rich social history and interactive demonstrations that immerse you in colonial life.

Boscobel House and Gardens

1601 Route 9D
Garrison, New York 10524
845-265-3638

GPS: 41.4109928, -73.9360658

Open for tours: Apr–Oct, 9:30–5, Wed–Mon;
Nov–Dec, 9:30–4, Wed–Mon.

Admission: House, Grounds, Exhibit \$16,
(62+) \$13. Grounds only \$9, (62+) \$8

The home was the dream of States Morris Dyckman (1755–1806), a Loyalist who made a fortune supplying British quartermasters during the Revolutionary War. He served as a clerk and procurement specialist under Sir William Erskine, the army's quartermaster general. When Erskine was recalled to London in 1779 for a government audit of his accounts, he asked Dyckman to accompany him. What was expected to be a one-year visit dragged on for ten years as the young

clerk helped defend not only Erskine but several other quartermasters who were under investigation for profiteering. His detailed accounting records helped clear all of the quartermasters and left them in his debt. He was paid generously by each officer and Sir William set up an annuity with a long-term payout. When Dyckman returned to the new republic in 1789, he expected to live as a "conspicuously well-fixed farmer, surrounded with objects of taste . . . who did not farm too seriously."

In 1794 States Morris Dyckman married Elizabeth Dorne, who was 18 years his junior. The couple had two children in 1797 and 1799. After delays caused by a legal battle in England, construction began in the summer of 1804 on the 250-acre farm he owned in Montrose, overlooking the Hudson. Sadly, Dyckman died in 1806 at 51 from the chronic illness he had battled for several years. Elizabeth oversaw the completion of the project and moved into the house in 1808 with their surviving child, Peter.

Boscobel has several architectural features that distinguish its neoclassical detail on the front of the home — the carved wooded swags of drapery with bowknots and carved tassels installed between the columns supporting the pediment above the second floor balcony. Rarely found in 18th century architecture, one-third of the front of the home is glass, a feature created by four sectional windows with



Boscobel

side lights in the front wings and six windows in the center façade.

After the federal government acquired the Montrose farm in the 1950s and built the FDR Veterans Administration Hospital on the site, the house was almost lost after it sold at auction for \$35 to a demolition contractor. In a last-ditch effort, funds were raised and the home was dismantled and stored in barns in the Garrison area across the river from West Point. A 26-acre tract for the house was acquired with excellent views of the Hudson, the Academy, and Constitution Island.

In the 1970s States Dyckman's 1806 household inventory was found in family records. His meticulous inventory and examples of surviving furniture owned by his descendants led Boscobel's board of directors to make the decision to completely redo the interiors of the home. The objective was to restore the house to the way it looked when Elizabeth Dyckman lived there from 1808 to 1823. The English furniture was replaced by furniture from the Federal period, made by cabinetmakers in New York City. The carpets, paint, fabrics, and wallpaper are reproductions based on documented period examples. After a six-month restoration, Boscobel was reopened to the public in June 1977.

The success of the restoration has made Boscobel one of the country's leading historic house museums. Visitors will see noteworthy collections of decorative

arts from the Federal period and the furniture of Duncan Phyfe, Michael Allison, and other New York cabinetmakers. Many pieces from States Dyckman's collection of silver, glass, and English china are on display. While his home was under construction, Dyckman sold his valuable library of 1,400 leather-bound books which he had purchased in London. Some of those books survived and are on exhibit.

The 60 acres surrounding the home draw many who simply wish to relax as they spend the day visiting the rose and herb gardens, orangery, springhouse, pond, geyser fountain and waterfall, picnic areas, and woodland trails which lead to rustic cedar gazebos and views of the Hudson. With a "Grounds Only" ticket (\$9), visitors can bring a picnic lunch and spend the day. Tours of the mansion are conducted by very well-informed docents.

United States Military Academy & Museum

Visitors Center: 415 Main St., Highland Falls, NY 10924

Visitors Center: 845-938-2638. Hours: 9–4:45.

West Point Tours: 845-446-4724

Go to www.westpointtours.com or phone for reservations

GPS: 41.3863272, -73.9653715

Tour rates: 1 hr (\$12); 2 hr (\$14); add West Point Cemetery & Old Cadet Chapel to 1 hr tour (\$14)

West Point Museum: 2110 South Post Rd., West Point, NY 10996

2110 South Post Rd. West Point, NY 10996
Adm: Free. Phone: 845-938-3590.

Hours: 10:30–4:15



Chapel, United States Military Academy

For more than 200 years, the United States Military Academy at West Point has trained young men (and since 1976, women) who become officers in the United States Army. The academy annually graduates approximately 1,000 men and women. Tuition is fully funded by the Army in return for a five-year commitment to active duty service upon graduation. The academic, moral, and ethical standards are the highest of any educational institution in our country. Cadets adhere to the Cadet Honor Code, which, in part, states that “a cadet will not lie, cheat, steal, or tolerate those who do.” The motto for the Corps is *Duty, Honor, Country*.

Those three hallowed words reverently dictate what you ought to be, what you can be, what you will be. They are your rallying points: to build courage when courage seems to fail; to regain faith when there seems to be little cause for faith; to create hope when hope becomes forlorn. . . . The soldier, above all other people, prays for peace, for he must suffer and bear the deepest wounds and scars of war. . . . Always in our ears ring the ominous words of Plato, that wisest of all philosophers: “Only the dead have seen the end of war.”

The three excerpts above are taken from the acceptance speech by General Douglas MacArthur given at West Point on May 12, 1962, when he received the Sylvanus Thayer Award which is pre-

sented annually by the West Point Association of Graduates. General MacArthur’s speech was selected as one of the 100 most significant American political speeches of the 20th century.

The USMA campus occupies nearly 16,000 acres (25 sq. miles) on the west side of the Hudson River 50 miles north of New York City. The Continental Army first occupied West Point on January 27, 1778, to claim the high bluffs above the narrow S-curve in the river. Using links as large as a man’s torso, they built the Great Hudson River Chain which was stretched across the river at the narrows to prevent the British Royal Navy from sailing upriver and dividing the colonies. Many a ship’s keel was ripped away by the huge chain positioned a few feet below the river’s surface.

In May 1783 George Washington recommended a military academy in his “Sentiments on a Peace Establishment.” During his presidency, Congress authorized a Corps of Engineers and Artilleryists, who were trained at West Point beginning in 1794.

Thomas Jefferson persuaded Congress to formally authorize the establishment and funding of the academy on March 16, 1802. The school opened with 10 cadets and five instructors. The War of 1812 spurred Congress to authorize a more formal curriculum and allocate funding



Trophy Point, U.S. Military Academy

for 250 cadets. In 1817, Colonel Sylvanus Thayer became the superintendent and designed the academy’s curriculum.

During the Civil War, 294 graduates served as general officers for the Union, and 151 served as general officers for the Confederacy. One-fourth of the students from the South remained loyal to the U.S. A West Point graduate commanded the armies of one or both sides in all of the 60 major battles of the war. Each subsequent war resulted in an increase in the student body. In WWII, four out of five of the five-star generals were alumni and nearly 500 graduates died in battle. In the Korean War, 157 alumni were killed; 273 died in Vietnam; and 83 have died in Iraq and Afghanistan. In the 1960s the size of the Corps expanded to 4,400 cadets. Today 15 percent of the entering freshman class are women.

In 1902 a Boston architectural firm established the neogothic style (some call it military gothic) still seen today. The gray and black granite used in the Cadet Chapel completed in 1910 is typical of the construction from this era.

The academy has graduated approximately 65,000 officers, including two U.S. presidents: Ulysses S. Grant and Dwight D. Eisenhower; the president of the Confederate States of America, Jefferson Davis; and several governors, senators, and congressmen. West Point produced 18

NASA astronauts, including five who went to the Moon. The Congressional Medal of Honor has been awarded to 74 graduates.

Campus Tours. I recommend the two-hour tour that includes the West Point Cemetery. Our tour guide made the cemetery visit very interesting: Norman D. Coda, the first American general ashore on D-Day; George Armstrong Custer, moved from his grave at the Battle of the Little Big Horn to West Point; George Goethals, superintendent and engineer who completed the Panama Canal six months early and \$20 million under budget. It also includes the main chapel which is the most impressive architecture on the campus. The chapel houses the largest organ in a religious structure in the world: 23,500 pipes. Talk about “surround sound!”

West Point Museum. Anyone interested in military history will be richly rewarded with a two-hour visit to the West Point Museum. It houses the oldest and largest collections of military artifacts in the Western Hemisphere. Separate galleries feature a history of warfare from days of the pharaohs in Egypt to the current War on Terror. Special exhibits address the history of weaponry and include George Washington’s pistols and Hermann Goering’s baton. Remember that a government-issued photo ID is required for entry to the academy and the museum.



Walkway over the Hudson

Walkway Over the Hudson

58 Parker Avenue
Poughkeepsie, NY 12601
845-454-9649
GPS: 41.7113070, -73.9244810
Hours: Daily (Sunrise to Sunset)
Parking: \$5 Admission: Free

The Poughkeepsie-Highland Railroad Bridge (PHRB) was the first span over the Hudson River south of the City of Albany. Plans for the bridge began in the late 1860s with the need to connect Pennsylvania’s coal fields with New England’s industries. When it was opened in 1889, the 6,768-foot length was the longest cantilevered and truss span bridge in the world. During World War II the bridge was considered critical to the war effort and was guarded 24 hours a day. After the war, other railroad routes began to diminish the PHRB’s use. After a fire destroyed over 700 feet of the bridge’s wood decking in 1974, it was closed and abandoned.

In 1998, Walkway Over the Hudson, a non-profit group, proposed the idea of turning the 110-year-old abandoned bridge into a pedestrian park. The group put together public and private funding, had the viability of the bridge’s superstructure tested, and hired a design and engineering firm. The design required 973 precast 15-ton concrete walkway panels that were attached to the original bridge’s structure. The dream became a reality with the official opening of the

park by New York governor David Paterson at 11 a.m. on October 3, 2009.

Today, the 24-foot wide linear park claims a new superlative: it is the world’s longest elevated pedestrian bridge. At 212 feet over the river and 1.28 miles long, the walkway provides extraordinary views of the Hudson River and the valley. It provides the perfect outing for joggers, walkers, and strollers. Household pets are welcome on a leash not more than 10 feet long. There are fee parking lots on both ends of the walkway which also provide wheelchair accessible handicap spaces. Restrooms, food and beverage concessions, and bike racks are available at both bridge approaches.

Operated by the New York State Park system, the walkway has interpretive signs at the bridge’s approaches as well as on the railings. Taking advantage of our “cell phone world,” a free cell phone tour (Talkway over the Walkway) is linked to selected interpretive signs attached to the railings.

Day use activities at the park include bike riding, bird watching, dog walking, jogging, walking, roller and in-line skating, picnicking, river traffic and train observation, and scenic viewing.

Check the temperature and winds before crossing. We stuffed light jackets and water bottles in our small backpacks. The weather was perfect and the hour we spent on the walkway was exhilarating.



The Landing Strip as seen from the open cockpit of a Standard D-25

Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome

9 Norton Rd., Red Hook, NY 12571
845-752-3200

GPS: 41.581140, -73.515240

Daily: 10-5 (no airshows weekdays)

Sat-Sun: Museum & biplane rides begin at 10
Airshow starts at 2.

Final airshow of season: Sunday, Oct. 16, 2011

Weekdays: \$10, seniors \$8

Weekends: \$20, seniors \$15

Biplane rides: \$75

Cole Palen was a farm boy from Poughkeepsie who had an unbounded love for the early airplanes and pilots who led America into the aviation age. In 1959 Palen found a farm for sale near Rhinebeck, New York, and brought his collection of vintage planes there to restore them and thrill young and old alike with a living history of aviation. Today the Aerodrome boasts one of the finest collections of antique aircraft in the world, including an original Bleriot XI, which is the oldest flying aircraft in the United States, and the second oldest in the world.

As a veteran of World War II, Palen enrolled in the Roosevelt Aviation School, Roosevelt Field, Long Island, to train as an aircraft mechanic. Palen was only 18 months old when Charles Lindbergh took off from Roosevelt Field in May 1927 to be the first to fly across the Atlantic. It was a special place for him that became even more special when he learned that one of the hangars on the field contained a collection of World War I aircraft. He dreamed of one day owning

a unique airfield where vintage aircraft could be flown to entertain and teach the public about our aviation history.

In 1951 Roosevelt Field was sold to developers for a large shopping complex. After Palen learned that Smithsonian had acquired three of the planes, he quickly bid his life savings for the remainder of the aircraft. To his surprise, he found himself the owner of a SPAD XIII, Avro 504K, Curtiss Jenny, Standard J-1, Aeromarine 39B, and a Sopwith Snipe. He had only 30 days to remove the planes from Roosevelt Field.

He cleared a runway on the farm he had purchased and built makeshift hangers from scrapped materials. The Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome was born. Cole continued to collect aircraft dating from the birth of aviation to the start of World War II. He restored the planes and flew them regularly. Where early original aircraft did not exist, he found the drawings from old manufacturing records and built accurate replicas. Vintage vehicles were also collected to bring an authentic context to the Aerodrome's summer shows.

The first air show in 1960 had an audience of 25. Word spread and Cole scheduled air shows on the last Sunday of the summer months. A museum was built for the more perfectly restored vintage aircraft and cars and three metal buildings continued to house planes that one day would be restoration projects.



A Curtiss Jenny

The early shows eventually led to a format of not only showing the flyable aircraft in their natural environment, but also providing a fun and entertaining day for the whole family. Open cockpit flights in a Standard D25 biplane brought the thrill of barnstorming from the twenties into the 21st century. The flight out over the Hudson River with blue skies above, the brisk air rushing by my head, and the Fall colors below will be an experience I will never forget.

Springwood, Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Site

4097 Albany Post Road, Route 9, Hyde Park, NY 12538

877-559-6777

GPS: 41-7704300, -73.9329050

Hours: Daily 9-5

Admission Fee: \$14, includes admission to FDR's Library & Museum

15 years and under, free admission

"All that is within me cries out to go back to my home on the Hudson River." When Franklin Delano Roosevelt's optimistic attitude toward life was worn down by the stresses of war in 1944, the nation's only four-term president yearned for his home where he felt most at ease. Born in a second-floor bedroom at Springwood in Hyde Park on January 30, 1882, Franklin was the only child of James and Sara Delano Roosevelt. Both his parents were from prominent Hudson River Valley families. Though Springwood was their

main residence, the Roosevelts also had a summer home on Campobello Island in Canada. Springwood and Campobello were the center of young Franklin's life until he left for boarding school at Groton when he was 14 years old.

Springwood was purchased by James Roosevelt in 1867. The large, yet simple farmhouse, built around 1800 in the Italianate style, was not ostentatious, and appealed to James who enjoyed hunting, fishing, riding, and taking care of his horses and cattle. He made some improvements to the home, adding two rooms and enlarging the servant's wing.

At the time of his father's death in 1900, Franklin was a freshman at Harvard where he was editor of the school newspaper, graduating in 1904. The following year he married Eleanor Roosevelt, a niece of President Theodore Roosevelt, and they began their family, which over the years grew to include six children. Franklin pursued a degree at Columbia Law School, and joined a Wall Street law firm. Inspired by his boarding school headmaster, Franklin was more interested in heeding his sense of social responsibility than in pursuing a career as a lawyer. His political interests led to his campaign for election to the New York Senate in 1910, which he won. In 1913, President Woodrow Wilson appointed him as Assistant Secretary of the Navy.

In 1915, after Franklin and his family



Springwood



FDR's office at Springwood

had moved in with Sara, Franklin and his mother collaborated on the final remodeling of Springwood to accommodate his growing family and political career. The home was more than doubled in size by adding two large wings and a third story. A columned portico was built around the entrance, and the exterior clapboard was replaced with stucco and fieldstone.

Roosevelt's rising political career was interrupted when he contracted polio, rendering him unable to walk without assistance. In time, his deep reserve of strength of character allowed him to adapt to his condition both physically and mentally, assisted by his confidant and advisor, Eleanor, who kept his political career on track by being his eyes and ears and traveling

when he couldn't. In 1928, he was elected Governor of New York, and was inaugurated as President of the United States in March 1933. As he continued to be elected to consecutive presidencies, he always returned to Hyde Park and Springwood to await the election results, delivering each acceptance speech from the front terrace of his lifelong home.

Franklin's election in 1933 was in the midst of grim economic conditions. One in four people were unemployed, and most banks had closed. Many had lost their confidence in the country's ability to recover, and looked to the new president for answers. Roosevelt's abiding optimism enabled him to establish many New Deal programs to create jobs and



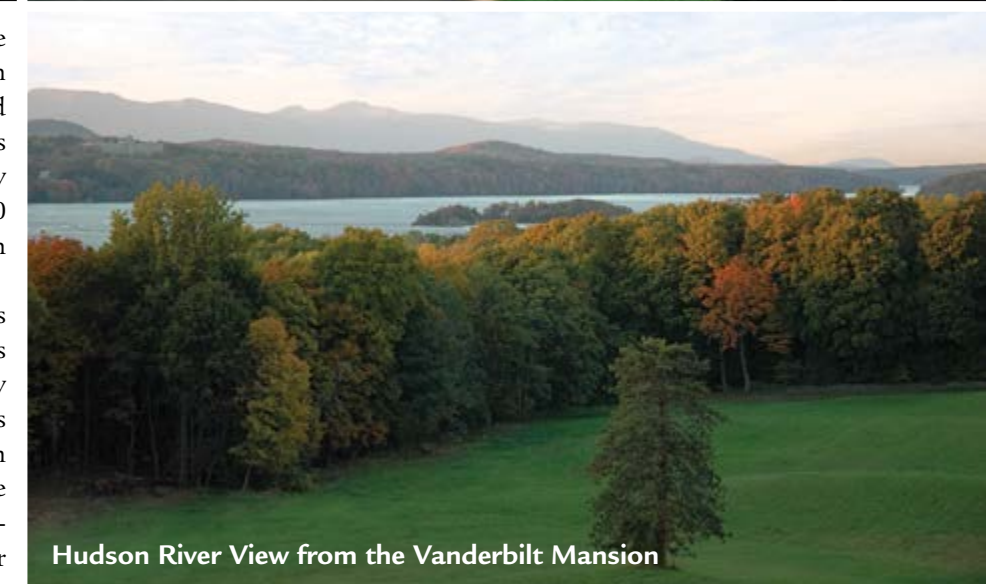
Val-Kill



Mrs. Roosevelt's living room at Val-Kill



Vanderbilt Mansion



Hudson River View from the Vanderbilt Mansion

strengthen the economy, including programs to provide assistance for the poor, sick, and elderly.

Another nationwide crisis erupted when the United States became involved in World War II in 1941. Roosevelt again called on inner reserves of strength to lead the nation and form an alliance among leaders of other countries to eventually defeat the Axis powers. In 1945, as he prepared a speech to be presented to the United Nations, Franklin suffered a fatal cerebral hemorrhage. He was brought home to Springwood to be buried in the Rose Garden. When Eleanor passed away in 1962, she was buried at his side.

Val-Kill, The Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site

4097 Albany Post Road, Route 9, Hyde Park, New York, 12538
845-229-9115
Tickets available at FDR Library & Museum

Anna Eleanor Roosevelt, born October 11, 1884, was orphaned by the age of ten and lived with her mother's family until she was sent to the Allenswood school in England when she was 15. Returning to New York in 1902, she began seeing Franklin Delano Roosevelt, her distant cousin. They were soon engaged, and married when Eleanor was 20. Sara Delano Roosevelt, Franklin's mother, maintained a constant presence in the couple's life, building and decorating a townhouse

for them in New York City, and later running the household at Springwood when Franklin, Eleanor, and children returned to live in Hyde Park.

When Franklin suggested that Eleanor and two of her friends build a cottage near Springwood so they could enjoy the Hudson River Valley year-round, the three friends accepted his offer of several acres of land enthusiastically. Eleanor was delighted at the prospect of finally having a place of her own. Franklin helped design the Dutch Colonial structure which was completed in 1925, and named Val-Kill, Dutch for valley stream.

One year later, Eleanor and her friends added a second building to house Val-Kill Industries, a business started to provide local people with industrial training. For a 10-year period, the trainees made high-quality reproductions of Early American furniture, pewter, and woven pieces.

When the business closed during the depression, Eleanor, now the First Lady, converted the factory building into two apartments, one for herself and the other for her secretary, and used it frequently when she returned to Hyde Park. Additional guest rooms were also created to handle the overflow from Springwood.

Eleanor enjoyed spending time at Val-Kill, using it as her special retreat and sanctuary. She was free to work late at night, or entertain world leaders and other visiting dignitaries at the outdoor

fireplace, a practice which she continued after Franklin's death. At Franklin's request, the Springwood estate was turned over to the U.S. Government, but Eleanor kept Val-Kill Cottage where she continued to live for another 17 years after his death.

Eleanor was appointed by President Truman as a delegate to the United Nations in 1946, a post she held until her resignation in 1952. She then traveled the world as a good will ambassador, and was active in the 1956 and 1960 Democratic campaigns.

After Eleanor's death, local citizens organized to preserve Val-Kill. The cottages were designated by President Jimmy Carter as the Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site in 1977. Visitors to Val-Kill can view a film biography of Eleanor Roosevelt and tour her home, Val-Kill Cottage, and the surrounding grounds.

Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum

4079 Albany Post Road, Route 9, Hyde Park, New York 12538
GPS: 41.7674140, -73.9338770
Hours: Apr-Oct, Daily, 9-6, Nov-Mar, Daily 9-5
Admission: \$7.00

Franklin D. Roosevelt planned a library and museum that would serve the country by providing access to his official papers. The first presidential library to be established, and the only presidential library to be used by its namesake,

it opened during his presidency on June 30, 1941. Roosevelt designed the Dutch Colonial building and donated the land on which it was built. Some of his famous "fireside chats" took place in the study of the library. The library houses 51,000 books, including 21,000 volumes from Roosevelt's personal collection.

Serving as a model for the nation's presidential library system, it preserves the written record and physical history of his presidency and houses the world's most important collection of material on the New Deal and World War II. In the war gallery, one can view a full-scale model of the top secret "Map Room," similar to Winston Churchill's "War Room" in London. FDR established this center in the basement of the White House to facilitate wartime communications. Also on display are rare documents and many gifts from foreign governments and individual dignitaries.

Part of the National Archives, the library is available for research. The archives include the three million pages of official records of Eleanor Roosevelt, "First Lady of the World." Also among the archives are 150,000 photographs, negatives, and audio-visual items.

The museum includes personal as well as official memorabilia. FDR's collections of stamps, coins, and ship models are displayed, as well as his 1936 Ford Phaeton fitted with hand levers to enable him to

drive it himself despite his disability.

Audio-visual and interactive exhibits make the library and museum a very interesting destination. The special exhibitions gallery changes displays on a regular basis.

Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site

4097 Albany Post Road, Route 9, Hyde Park, NY 12538
845-229-9115
GPS: 41.770537, -73.93328
Mansion: Open Daily, 9-5
Grounds: Open Daily, Sunrise to Sunset
Admission Fee for House

In 1895 the *New York Times* reported that Frederick William Vanderbilt, grandson of shipping and railroad giant "Commo-

dore" Cornelius Vanderbilt "has recently joined the little colony of millionaires up the river, and is getting ready to make extensive improvements on his house and grounds." The home on the Hyde Park estate purchased by Frederick and his wife, Louise, had proven to be structurally unsound. Charles Follin McKim was engaged to design a new 50-room house which was completed in 1898. Built in the classical style with columns on all four sides of the exterior and constructed of a steel frame covered with Indiana limestone, the home stands today as a reminder of a time when huge fortunes were accumulated as industry drove the development of this country. Frederick Vanderbilt continued the family involve-



The Culinary Institute of America

ment in railroads as he sat on the boards of 22 railroads, and served as director of the New York Central for 61 years.

Louise, meanwhile, busied herself with entertaining. Their Hyde Park estate had its own dock for visitors arriving by boat on the Hudson. A railroad station on the estate allowed visitors to arrive by train if they preferred. The home offered numerous guest rooms, with rooms on the third floor for accommodating the maids of the visiting ladies.

The Vanderbilts created a grand home filled with antiquities to rival the “old money” estates of their acquaintances. The interior décor of the mansion was under the direction of Stanford White, who traveled to Rome, Paris, London, Florence, and Venice to purchase European antiques and decorative objects. The carved wooden dining room ceiling, interior marble columns, and many tapestries were no doubt obtained abroad. Many pieces of furniture bear the signature of Paul Sormani, a noted 19th century cabinetmaker in Paris. Twice as much was spent on the decoration and furnishings as on the construction of the house, for a grand total of nearly two million dollars. The original contents are on display in the home, giving a glimpse into the interests and lifestyle of the Vanderbilts in the Gilded Age.

Prior to ownership by the Vander-

bilt's, the 600-acre estate had become famous for its landscape that featured a wide variety of specimen trees and plants. In the 1820s, Andre Parmentier was employed by a previous owner, David Hosack, to improve the design of the grounds in the style of English landscape gardening. Visitors from Europe came to Hyde Park to view the results, proclaimed to be “one of the finest specimens of the Romantic style of landscape gardening in America.”

Today, stately formal terraced gardens, wide lawns, carriage roads, and a hiking trail with inspiring views of the Hudson River and the Catskill Mountains allow many opportunities for appreciation of the area's stunning natural beauty.

The magnificence of the Hudson River Valley and its easy access to New York City made the “country house” both pleasurable and convenient for the Vanderbilts' use for a few weeks in the spring and fall, with an occasional winter weekend escape from the social season in the city. After Louise's death in 1926, Frederick made his “gentlemen's farm” at Hyde Park his main residence until his death in 1938. The Vanderbilt Mansion and 211 acres of the original estate were given to the National Park Service in 1940 when the family expressed a desire to maintain the property as a national monument and memorial to



Ristorante Caterina de' Medici

Frederick and Louise Vanderbilt. A visit to the Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site is a step back in time to an era of great wealth and privilege.

The Culinary Institute of America

1946 Campus Dr., Hyde Park, NY, 12538
845-471-6608
GPS: 41.7451613, -73.9326094
Hours: Tours available: Mon-Fri, 4 pm; Monday only, 10am. By reservation.
Fee: \$6 per person

In 1946, as America rejoiced over the end of World War II, veterans by the thousands returned to this country looking for employment. In New Haven, Connecticut, attorney Frances Roth realized the need for well-trained food service workers. With the support of Katherine Angell, wife of the president of Yale University, she founded a school in New Haven to provide culinary arts training to returning veterans. In just four years, 600 veterans from 38 states had received training and graduated from the newly established institution.

The school continued to flourish, and in 1969 was overflowing with over 1000 students. A nationwide search was made for a new facility, and a Jesuit property overlooking the Hudson River at Hyde Park was chosen. The Culinary Institute of America opened at the new location in 1972. Graduates of the school were

sought after as the reputation of the school continued to grow. In 1979, *Life* magazine proclaimed the Culinary Institute “The Harvard of Haute Cuisine.” Growing demand for admission resulted in additional locations opening in California and Texas, and an international location in Singapore began accepting students in 2010.

The Culinary Institute of America now boasts over 40,000 alumni. Julia Child noted: “In practically every successful restaurant or hotel in this country I've been in, more often than not I've encountered a Culinary Institute of America graduate in a leadership position.” The current president, Dr. Tim Ryan, is the first alumnus to have the role of leading the school.

The Culinary Institute in Hyde Park has five student-staffed restaurants available to the public. Reservations are necessary for four of the restaurants which feature Italian, French, American, and casual dining options, available by calling 845-471-6608 or visiting www.ciachef.edu. The Apple Pie Bakery Café does not take reservations, and is open Monday through Friday, 8 am to 6:30 pm. You can't go wrong with your restaurant choice, all offer tempting and delicious fare! Also available on campus is a bookstore filled with an array of cookbooks, assorted kitchen utensils, and other souvenirs.



New York State Sheep and Wool Festival at Rhinebeck

New York State Sheep and Wool Festival

6550 Spring Brook Avenue, Rhinebeck, NY 12572
www.sheepandwool.com
Hours: 9-5 Sat, Oct 15; 10-5 Sun, Oct 16, 2011
Admission: \$12 per day; 2 day pass, \$17

In 1972, the Dutchess County Sheep and Wool Growers Association began sponsoring a festival at the Dutchess County Fairgrounds in Rhinebeck, New York, to showcase the woolen industry. Each year on the third full weekend of October, participants feature their natural-fiber-producing livestock, including sheep, goats, angora rabbits, llamas, musk oxen, and alpacas, along with the fibers they produce and the products made from those fibers. Growers, knitters, crocheters, handspinners, and seamstresses gather to compete in spinning bee contests and a made-with-wool fashion show. Various competitions award blue ribbons to fleece, yarn, and items handmade from wool.

Sheep-shearing demonstrations, livestock exhibits and judging, and llamas and alpacas on parade help all attendees increase their appreciation for all things wool. Workshops are available for anyone who wants to learn more about becoming proficient with making wool products themselves. One can sign up for instruction in weaving, spinning, dyeing or felting wool, knitting, crocheting, and

designing wool products.

The Sheep and Wool Festival is definitely a family affair, where children of all ages can see Leaping Llamas and participate in Mad Science activities. Old-timer exhibits show “how it used to be,” and food stands offer many options including wonderfully delicious apple cider and apple cider donuts!

Rhinebeck, New York

In the early 1700s, what is now U.S. Route 9 was laid out when the New York colonial assembly approved funds to construct the King's Highway, later called Albany Post Road. European settlers had come to the Hudson River Valley in the 1680s when a Dutch group bought 2,200 acres from the Iroquois Indians. The population grew as more immigrants fleeing religious persecution arrived.

Although the town of Rhinebeck was not officially organized until 1788, the original building of the current Beekman Arms Inn was erected in 1766 where the Inn still operates today. Beekman Arms claims the distinction of being the oldest continually operating hotel in America. The Continental Army drilled on the front lawn as the colonists prepared to fight for independence.

Today, with Colonial charm and character, Beekman Arms offers accommoda-



Sheep judging at Sheep and Wool Festival



Fall color on the Festival concourse

tions and dining in a centralized location from which guests can explore Rhinebeck's many gift shops, antique stores, and restaurants. The historic village is also a central point for visiting the National Historic Landmark District that preserves nine estates in the area.

Olana State Historic Site, Home of Frederic Edwin Church

5720 Route 9G, Hudson, NY, 12534
518-828-0135
GPS: 42.2091900, -73.8372739
Hours: House, Apr-Oct, Tues-Sun, 10-5; Nov-Mar, Fri-Sun, 11-4
Evelyn & Maurice Sharp Gallery, open Nov-Mar
Grounds: Open daily, 8am-sunset
Admission: House, \$9 adults; \$8 seniors; children 11 & under, free
Gallery, \$6 adults, \$5 seniors, children 11 & under, free

When driving through the Hudson River Valley north of Rhinebeck, one might catch a glimpse of what appears to be a castle-like structure, with towers reaching high above the horizon. The home, designed and built by Frederic Church in the 1860s, reflects the influence of his extensive travels.

Frederic Church was born in Hartford, Connecticut, in 1826 into a wealthy New England family. His grandfather, Samuel Church, had founded a paper mill in Massachusetts, and his father, Joseph Church, was a silversmith, watchmaker, and an official in the Aetna Life Insurance Com-

pany. With the support of his family, Frederic was able to pursue his interest in art, and became a pupil of Thomas Cole in Catskill, New York, at the age of 18. At 22 years of age, he was elected to the National Academy of Design. Frederic settled in New York, but traveled during the warmer months to South America and later to Europe and countries of the Middle East. Using the winter to paint, he showed his work at annual exhibitions of the National Academy of Design along with other artists of the period who presented the New England landscape as art. The painting style of Frederic Church, Thomas Cole, Jasper Cropsey, and others came to collectively be known as the Hudson River School. Very popular with the public, most of the finest works of this movement were painted between 1855 and 1875. Many of these artists, including Church, were founders of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City in 1869.

After his marriage to Isabel Carnes in 1860, Frederic bought a farm in Hudson, New York, and eventually added 18 acres of hilltop property overlooking the Hudson River. After he and his family returned from traveling in the Middle East, he began the design and construction of Olana. The towers, balconies, recessed porches, and other elements of the home's design incorporate ideas acquired on his travels. An eclectic collection of



Olana, home of Frederic Edwin Church

original furnishings and décor are on display in the richly decorated home. Also on view is an array of Church's paintings and collections.

His love of the landscapes he painted is seen in the development of the grounds surrounding Olana. He directed the creation of a lake, planted thousands of trees, and built over five miles of carriage drives, showcasing many panoramic views of the Hudson River Valley. The grounds are open to the public.

The Olana Visitor Center at the Coachman's House features exhibits and a film, as well as books and gift items.

Restaurants We Liked

CULINARY INSTITUTE OF AMERICA
US Route 9, Hyde Park, NY 12538
845-471-6608
Choose between their Italian, French, and American Restaurants
Dining is elegant and expensive, but it is worth it. Dress: business casual. Reservations advised.
Informal dining at the Apple Pie Bakery Café. Great sandwiches, bakery items, coffee, and soft drinks.

THE TAVERN AT BEEKMAN ARMS
US Route 9, Rhinebeck, NY 12572
845-876-1766
American cuisine. A la carte. Several dining rooms including the 1766 Tavern. We enjoyed the Garden Greenhouse dining room.
Lunch, \$15-20. Dinner, \$35-45. Prix Fixe, five menu choices, \$17.66.

ME-OH-MY PIE AND CAFÉ
7466 South Broadway (Route 9), Red Hook, NY 12571
845-835-8340
The best homemade pies on the planet! Quiches, pot pies, soups, sandwiches — fresh & delightful.
Jane's Ice Cream and Thin-Crust Chocolate Chip Cookies
Moderate prices.

Campgrounds We Liked

INTERLAKE RV PARK
428 Lake Drive, Rhinebeck, NY 12572
GPS: 41.9055653, -73.8124478
845-266-5387 www.interlakervpark.com
One of the nicest full-service RV parks in the Hudson Valley.
2011 rates: water/sewer/50amp/cable, \$54/night, Free WiFi.
Features: large heated pool, fishing, boating, playground, activity fields, laundromat, camp store, firewood, ice.
Chipper's Snack Shack, 7am-7pm, Fri-Mon, breakfast, sandwiches, ice cream.
Friendly and helpful management. Privately owned and operated by the Dumais family.
Camp sites are nicely spaced.
Best location for the middle and upper Hudson Valley.

NEW YORK CITY NORTH / NEWBURGH KOA
119 Freetown Hwy., Plattekill, NY 12568
845-564-2836
GPS: 41.63785, -74.100222
Closest full-service campground to West Point and lower Hudson area.
In October, be sure you stay here only on weeknights as Halloween celebrations dominate the weekends.
Reserve a Deluxe RV site with concrete pad, 50-amp service, water, and sewer for \$60.59/night.

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PLEASE TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION

Notice of New Refrigerator Recall

Attention: All customers with Norcold Refrigerators

**There is a recall involving Norcold Refrigerators
that are in Tiffin units
built from December 1996 to December 2010.**

**If you have a unit produced during that time
period that has a Norcold refrigerator, please
immediately call **800-767-9101**
and speak to a Norcold representative
for the most up-to-date information.**

They will advise what you need to do.

**This is a very serious recall
that could involve a refrigerator catching fire.**

Do not delay.

Norcold Recall #10E-049

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT 1.800.767.9101 OR WWW.NORCOLD.COM/RECALL

OFFICIAL REFRIGERATOR RECALL

**If your refrigerator is on Recall,
DO NOT operate it until it can be professionally retrofitted
with its proper remedy.**

**The installation of this safety device
will be at NO CHARGE to you.**

Action Steps – If you have one of the recalled refrigerators and you...

***Currently reside in the RV,
you should immediately:***

1. Set the refrigerator to “OFF.”
2. Unplug the refrigerator through the Service Vent on the outside of the vehicle.
3. Contact your Dealer, a Norcold Authorized Service Center or call 1-800-767-9101 as soon as possible to get assistance.

***Do not currently reside in the RV,
you should immediately:***

1. Set the refrigerator to “OFF.”
2. Unplug the refrigerator through the Service Vent on the outside of the vehicle.
3. Disconnect from shore power.
4. Contact your Dealer, a Norcold Authorized Service Center or call 1-800-767-9101 as soon as possible to get assistance.

**Failure to follow these instructions can result
in fire causing injury or death.**

**To check your refrigerator’s status regarding this Recall,
or for more information about
other Norcold recalls involving older models,
go to www.norcold.com/recall**



The Life and Times of Tiffin Motorhome Owners

She's Happy – He's Lucky PART 4

by Dave McClellan

March 27, 2011... Entering the town of Red Bay was an exhilarating experience. From the time we made the initial purchase of our Phaeton, we had heard so much about the Tiffin factory, service area and campground that I had goose bumps while driving through the town. Not a very big town but they have all the usual and necessary stores including a McDonalds. I just love their french fries. We found the service area and stopped at the check-in building. There we met Rod and Marsha who were very helpful describing the procedure for getting our service work done, giving us a service number, and assigning us a parking space with hookups. Norris Lewey, service coordinator, set up our appointment to the appropriate service bay, with instructions to be there at 7 a.m. It's funny to see so many motorhomes take off at the same time each morning and park in front of all those large bay doors like race horses at a starting gate. When the minute hand gets to 12, the door opens, you drive in, and your service experience begins.

We were assigned door six where we met service tech David Sparks and his sidekick Craig. David looked very familiar and it took several minutes for me to realize that I had met him two years ago at the Tiffin rally at Normandy Farms in Foxboro, Massachusetts. He was there doing minor repairs on coaches as a courtesy provided by Tiffin. How ironic and coincidental that out of dozens of other technicians he was the person assigned to do my repairs once again, but this time it was 1300 miles from Massachusetts. He remembered me because it was a very hot and muggy day in September of 2009 when I gave him and his co-worker cans of soda. David will also be in Foxboro for another Allegro rally in September 2011. Terri and I signed up two days after it was announced. Hopefully it will give us the opportunity to meet some of our readers and the friends we made in Red Bay.

I had a list of needed repairs that were under warranty which was turned in at check-in. The techs and I went through the list with care, and they told me exactly what they would do to fix the motorhome while giving me advice on maintenance and other tips. In the service building, motorhome owners are allowed in most repair areas except the paint shop, welding bay, any bay that has a motorhome on a lift and the cabinet shop, where you must have proper eye protection. There is a very nice lounge area near the middle of the service building with restrooms, free coffee and tea, vending machines, and even tables with decks of cards and jigsaw puzzles to help customers pass the day. I was

constantly meeting and talking shop with other Tiffin owners. Terri and I played cards and watched TV in the lounge area. Everyone was so friendly, not just the Tiffin staff, but everywhere we went in Red Bay to get needed supplies at the grocery, hardware, restaurants, and CVS for prescriptions. One of our favorite places to eat lunch, and the least expensive, other than Jacks and McDonalds, was the Piggly Wiggly grocery store deli. They have excellent chicken and pork sandwiches with full dinners if you are really hungry. There is a separate room of tables to enjoy your meals or you can buy take-out. We also took a ride, with two other couples, seven miles over the state line into Mississippi to the Reeves Fish and Steak House which was very good. I'd be remiss not to mention one of those couples we met. Mike and Elaine Austin, author of "On the Road with Elaine" in this publication, coincidentally happened to be at Tiffin during our stay. We are now keeping in touch and hope to meet them again this summer in Massachusetts.

We had such a pleasant experience at Red Bay. Meeting all the folks at Tiffin was well beyond our expectations. The office and tech personnel exemplified the true meaning of Southern hospitality, not only at the service center but also when we checked in at the reception office with Rod and Marsha Schultz and checked out with Bob and Judy Pruit. The Tiffin store with Becky and Della... factory tour guides Shawn and Dora Wallace... and how could we ever forget Red Davis, the factory "Tour Master." The service techs including Dave Sparks and Craig, Curtis Clement, Sandy Russell, Pete, Trevor, TJ, Jimmy, Bruce and Wade were all so very patient and helpful, and we thank them for all they did for us. Others in the service area office whom we had the pleasure to meet were Peggy Elliot, who made our initial appointment and rescheduled it when we could not keep the first one; and Gail Parrish who found us a hotel room while our motorhome had to be left overnight in bay six while being repaired. And, finally I got to meet Stephanie Umfress who has graciously answered questions and delivered all my emails to Bob Tiffin over the past years. You just can't imagine how friendly they are.

While at Red Bay I was able to see Bob Tiffin in his office, this time under more calm and peaceful conditions. My initial meeting with Bob was at the Tampa RV show where it was very hectic and everyone wanted to see and talk to him. In his office, we had a very nice conversation about our Phaeton motorhome and the experiences we have encountered over the past couple

of years. Bob knows me as the person who... "if I didn't have bad luck, I wouldn't have any luck at all" but that's another long story. He listened intently while I explained our situation. He is the most understanding and calm individual I know. I'm never nervous about speaking to anyone but I have to admit I had a bit of anxiety while talking to him, because I think of him as being the giant in the RV industry that all manufacturers and customers look up to. His persona is fascinating and he speaks so sincerely and with firm authority. We wish continued success to Bob, and thank him for making us feel so welcome. His kindness was more than we could have imagined. We would wish for all Tiffin owners the same pleasurable experience we had in our visit. Bob goes out of his way to accommodate everyone that wants to just say hello or discuss RV matters. We can't thank him enough for his time and effort to make us, as friends and customers, feel as important as his own family. We thank all the folks at Red Bay for their kindness. We have made more great friends and isn't that what life is all about?

Sadness fell over us as we left our new friends at Red Bay. We

started our trip north to the Nashville area which is a 275 mile drive. The Nashville attractions would only take about one week to discover so we booked the Country Side Resort in Lebanon, Tennessee, for eight days. As usual we stay at campgrounds just outside the main attraction area to avoid city traffic and find lower campground fees. Lebanon is a quiet yet convenient area just two miles off Rte 40 and a short drive to Nashville. Campground owners Ron and Carol Fernandez were very accommodating and helpful. They have a small park and the layout was such that we had easy access to a level pull-through site with 50-amp service, water, and sewer. Cell phones worked fine when compared to service in some other campgrounds, and the view of the valley below the park was stunning. They also have a tennis court, horseshoes, basketball, large pavilion with a stone fireplace, LP gas, store with food/RV merchandise and your choice of sun or shaded sites. It's also a great birding location and was recommended by a full timer at our last one-night stop-over. In Nashville we went to the Country Music Hall of Fame and the Grand Ole Opry, checked out the honky tonk joints

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with all their entertainers, and went to the Wildhorse Saloon twice, once to see a show and the second time for a nice dinner/show to meet friends who were traveling from Colorado back to Florida. Several times we just drove around the area to see the scenic countryside.

I love talking to other campers to learn more about their full-timing experiences, and to meet new friends. When I see a Tiffin owner, I go out of my way to say hello and strike up a conversation. Camping folks are like a full-timer's encyclopedia, just loaded with a wealth of information about tourist areas and campgrounds. They love to tell their tales of adventure, and Terri and I love to listen.

So our time here in the Nashville area is over and we now move back into the Eastern time zone. Join us on the final leg of this six-month round trip for more information about where to stay, what to do, and what we have learned as new full-timers. Our next destinations (some on our bucket list) are Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, the Smoky Mountain National Park, Washington D.C., and Hershey, Pennsylvania. To help cure our homesickness, we'll visit our family when we return to the small town of Peru to our mini-campground we call "Beechwood RV Resort" and summer retreat in the Berkshire Mountains of Massachusetts. From our summer base we will be traveling through New England and New York for more adventures and sightseeing. 

Seven Old Ladies and a Dog on a Bus to Arkansas, Part Three

The answer to the age-old question, "Can seven ladies sleep in a Phaeton?" is NO. I can take eight family members since four are teenagers, because one has to sleep on the floor, and we are usually at Disney where no one sleeps anyway, but ladies do not sleep on the floor, especially when a dog is sleeping with someone.

Lake Catherine State Park, Arkansas, has great cabin accommodations for the extra beds. We actually thought we might set up two tables for bridge in the cabin on the screened-in porch by the river, but the biggest draw was the Rolling Teepee where the food and drink were located. As usual we "stuffed" the fridge and all the available cubbyholes with good food - brisket, Panini sandwiches, chili, Deli sandwiches for lunch, a variety of breakfasts, and one huge Italian Cream cake that lasted for five days. We have now also added a Keurig to the RV so we have hot coffee available on call. This time we learned to keep the dog candy away from the people candy.

We had to play bridge with a dummy since we were one short (we kept up with her ghost scores and she almost won the week's score), and thought that would be easy enough - but it tried our intelligence at this age to remember to jump up and play a hand with the other table to fill in - but the biggest problem was re-

membering to jump back to our home table! This was a real circus with two tables of bridge in a Phaeton. Remembering to go back to the other table after bidding was easy when we were young, but it's a bit of brain drain to do so now.

We needed to break up our days of bridge with a trip into Hot Springs, and a Honda Pilot will seat seven, we found out. We all took our bathing suits into town for the hot springs bath houses, but we ran out of time because we found too many bling shops across the street, along with the best hamburgers in town.

There were plenty of places for walks around the park and to the falls to clear our heads for bidding our cards, but we were soon back to another round of bridge well into the evenings.

This crew is now well-versed on setting up the RV and even "cleaning up" to go home. They break out the rubber gloves and play with the slinky at the end and switch out hoses. I give instructions, and they can roll up hoses in a flash, pull jack pads and blocks, and check antennas. But after all, we've been a team for a while since we all went to high school together, played bridge as young mothers, and raised our children under the bridge tables. At one point we could bid and feed a baby at the same time. We've found it now takes more concentration. Wonder why?

On the way home we had a cargo delivery van try to run us into construction pylons closing a lane, even though I had blinkers on and was politely slowly rolling, waiting for entrance into a clear lane. I thought he was giving us entrance, but he changed his mind and went around us. I found it takes nerves of steel to get pushed into big sand pylons while a truck whizzes around you. He was high-tailing it ahead of us so we couldn't get his license number, but little did he know we had a chase car of two little ladies with the vengeance of mad cats that despite his 70+ miles per hour, they caught up, got his license number and truck number. Luckily looks like no damage except to nerves. Those big pylons do move, I found out.

Thanks once again to the RV crew at Vogt in Fort Worth, Tom and Brent. They keep the bus up and running for these little old ladies. Our next trip will be to the Balloon Festival in Albuquerque and Santa Fe. Bridge, good food, friendship, and balloons, what more could you ask for?

Judy Hobart
Bedford, Texas



The Allegro RED Best Choice for Our Business

August 6, 2011. In 2010 while searching for our first RV, we met Bob Tiffin at the Pennsylvania RV Show, and he was instrumental in fueling our desire to own a Tiffin.



Our first criteria for an RV was ample basement storage. Dealers were puzzled and some even asked how many bodies we were going to store . . . haha!

We hit the road in March with our business called Wag 'n' Tag. We exhibit and sell unique pet supplies at wine festivals, air shows, and balloon festivals. We also do the boardwalks at beaches and the very elite southern women's shows. After all, everyone has a pet and we Americans spend more money on our pets than we do ourselves.

Now that we have the Allegro RED we can pull up to a festival, unload at the exhibit site, and dry camp on the festival grounds. We have met wonderful people and pets, and they have shared enough hilarious and touching dog stories for me to write a book.

Our coach is in Red Bay having a few warranty items fixed. We will return on August 10 to pick it up. We are in awe of the business Bob Tiffin has built. We toured the factory in Red Bay and the paint plant in Belmont. We love our Allegro RED but are even more sure of our choice after visiting Red Bay.

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Leptospirosis in Dogs

by Dr. John Pilarczyk

You are probably asking: “Why are we talking about this disease in a pet travel column?” Well, because of our travels, our pets are much more exposed to Leptospirosis. Another reason you should become familiar with Leptospirosis is because of its ability to infect humans as well as our pets.

Leptospirosis is a bacteria found in the urine and maintained in the kidneys of mammalian hosts such as raccoons, opossums, foxes, skunks, etc. *Leptospira* belong to a group of organisms called Spirochetes. They move and wriggle in a spinning motion using a tail (flagella).

Leptospirosis is more prevalent in pets in summer and fall. Cold winters will kill the bacteria when temperatures reach zero degrees. The bacteria is also killed rapidly by drying out, but persists in standing water, dampness, and muddy areas. More cases occur in areas of heavy rainfall.

As RV enthusiasts we expose our pets to these bacteria more and more as we go to campgrounds and public parks. Leptospirosis used to affect mostly sporting dogs, herding dogs and other working breeds, but is no longer found just in rural areas. It is now common in suburban areas, and has been reported in all 50 states with more cases reported in the Midwest, Northeast and on the West Coast.

This organism can get in the ground water which then serves as a source of infection. Heavy rainfall can cause the bacteria to be washed into standing water. The infection is picked up when the pet wades or swims in that water, or drinks it. The disease is spread through the urine of wildlife (or infected dogs) while marking their territory. Most pets pick up the disease by smelling this urine. Rats as well as livestock can spread Leptospirosis.


The Lepto organism frequently attacks the kidneys and bile duct of the liver. It can spread to the spleen, eyes, nervous system and genital tract. Acute or chronic renal disease may follow. Symptoms may include fever, vomiting, diarrhea, jaundice, and bleeding tendencies. Not all dogs will suffer severe signs of illness.

A diagnosis is made by taking blood and doing antibody titers over two to four weeks. A four-fold increase in titers is considered definitive. Treatment usually requires hospitalization, IV fluids and antibiotics such as amoxicillin and/or doxycycline. Penicillin G is effective but needs to be given intravenously. If your pet is vomiting, then the IV route needs to be used.

Since this is a zoonotic disease (spread from animal to human) gloves should be worn as well as face protection when handling infected dogs. This disease can be fatal due to organ damage, even with treatment.

As we travel to state and federal parks and get more and more wildlife exposure in cities, it behooves us at vaccination time to get our pets immunized. The old vaccines only contained two of the Lepto organisms. There are many types of Leptospirosis found in the environment but four of them seem to cause the most problems. Preventing these organisms in your pet requires vaccination for Lepto including the four species (*Grippityphosa*, *Canicola*, *Icterohemorrhagica*, and *Pomona*).

Since the vaccine for Leptospirosis is being used against a bacteria, immunity probably does not last even 12 months. Vaccination is recommended in high-risk hunting dogs every six months. It is best to give this vaccine when no other immunizations are due, which will help reduce any reactions.

Remember this disease can be transferred from your pet to you, so take preventive measures. Vaccinate and restrain your dog with a leash to keep their exposure down. The forests and campgrounds are great, but disease exposure lurks. 

Dr. Pilarczyk practiced veterinary medicine for 38 years in Tampa, Florida. He and his wife, Kay, travel most of the year in their 2007 Phaeton.

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Wade Humphres

COMPLETING HIS 10TH YEAR AS MANAGER OF THE TIFFIN SERVICE CENTER

With 27 years of experience at Tiffin Motorhomes on his résumé, Wade Humphres was offered the position of manager of the Tiffin Service Center in 2001. He knew when he accepted the offer that the position would require his best problem-solving skills. He started his career at Tiffin in March 1974 on the bottom rung of the ladder when TMH had a total of 40 employees. Today nine supervisors and 160 employees report to Wade Humphres.

After graduating from Vina High School in 1972, Wade worked at Commodore and Buccaneer, small motorhome plants 25 miles from home in Hamilton. “Looking for something closer, I stopped by the Tiffin plant and talked to the plant manager, Bill Emerson,” Wade said. “We lived five miles out in the country from Red Bay. We had cows and raised corn and hay. Dad was an electrician.”

Emerson offered Wade a job that cut about 40 miles a day off his roundtrip commute. “I started out in clean-up, getting coaches ready to ship,” Wade remembered. It wasn’t long before he was working on the production line, learning to do all of the various jobs. He soon got another promotion to “utility man,” a floating position where he filled in at any job on the line when someone was absent. “Tiffin had a small welding shop then; we rolled them out of the welding shop right into the production line,” he said.

“Back in the seventies and eighties, our coaches were pretty simple to build,” he noted. “There was no paint plant. When a unit came off the production line and was cleaned up, it was pretty much ready to ship.” In the mid-eighties, Wade received a big promotion to supervisor. “We were still building all of the coaches with aluminum siding at that time,” he said.

During Wade’s advancements in his career at TMH, his personal life was also seeing some changes. In 1976 he married his high school sweetheart, Linda Thompson. Two years later Stephanie was born and in 1981 they had Jonathan. Today Stephanie and her husband have five children and Jonathan has one son. Jonathan is now building his career at Tiffin Motorhomes in the warranty department.

In 1990 the new assembly line plant opened on the opposite side of Second Street. “Coaches with aluminum siding continued to be built in the old plant and the new plant housed the production line for coaches with fiberglass siding,” Wade explained. “Roy Gober and I transferred to the new plant as supervisors.”

The service area for working on owners’ coaches was located

As manager of the Service Center, Wade finds that a considerable part of his business day is spent in public relations. Below, Les Fairchild, from Fair Play, South Carolina, drops by to express his appreciation for the work done in replacing a storage compartment door.





in the first production building where the woodworking shop is now. Owners parked along the railroad tracks and had full hookups. The company eventually had 12 service bays. Wade continued in production line supervision for 15 years.

With an in-depth knowledge of how motorhomes are built, Wade's career took a new direction. "I transferred to online technical support," he said. "There were four of us at that time and we handled questions from both dealers' service departments and individual owners. After working in support for two years, Tim asked me to take over the Service Center in 2001."

The Service Center continued at its original location in the assembly building on Second Street until the new 120,000 sq. ft. building opened a mile away in 2005 on property that had been Red Bay's airport. "We were breaking new ground in the motorhome industry," Wade said. "No other motorhome manufacturer offered anything this comprehensive for service to owners."

Wade has developed a management structure of nine supervisors for the growing service operation. D-Ray Hester supervises the physical operation of the service center, managing the overall workflow. Pete Blanton supervises the Repair North and Treno

D-Ray Hester, physical operations manager, consults with Wade at the end of the day on workflow in the Service Center. They have been working together for 10 years in running the facility. • In addition to fishing, Wade finds a great deal of pleasure playing bass guitar in a gospel band. The group plays at churches, hospitals, festivals, and nursing homes. Here they are playing at the Founders Day Festival on the square in Red Bay. Jimmy Oliver, far right, is another familiar face you may have seen at the service center. He both plays guitar and sings with the band.

Smith handles Repair South. Greg Dees supervises Mechanic Repair and Dennis Scott oversees the Cabinet Repair area. Jimmy Deaton takes care of the Body Shop and Scotty Hardin supervises Paint Repair. Jesse Vess is the company's parts manager. Elmo Martinez supervises parts inventory and shipping.

By memory and without looking at any prompting sheets, Wade describes his organization and the various responsibilities of each employee. Having a mental grasp at once on such a large group attests to his ability to oversee the Service Center.

"J. C. Blackburn handles all of the service issues related to chassis and works with owners who have disabled coaches on the road. Jimmie Oliver schedules service into the appropriate service bays, working closely with Norris Lewey who interviews owners at their coaches to evaluate their service issues," Wade explained.

"The Parts & Service Department currently employs 15. They support owners who have service questions as well as the technical staff in dealer service departments. Two in this department do strictly email support. Parts orders are also processed online by this department.

"Adam Hester handles chassis parts and service and Jonathan Myrick takes care of return parts and warranty issues in that area.

"The Parts Department itself requires a staff of 24. There are two parts pullers, four counter employees, four who build shipping boxes, and three who prepare shipping documents. On average, the department ships 85 parts orders daily, not including five large items such as front caps which require wooden boxes," he said.

The Service Center has three bays for tile and windshield repair, three for replacing the floors for holding tanks, one for fiberglass re-roofing, one for replacing shades, four express bays (3 hours max), two for welding (e.g. installing a new generator), four for mechanics (chassis), two for the cabinet shop, four for prepping to paint, two for painting (fully enclosed OSHA downdraft paint bays), and one for electrical-inverter problems. The Center has three employees who float from bay to bay repairing electronics.

"Robert Gober and Stan Patterson oversee the repair of units where the customer is not present. They maintain contact with the customer during the repair process to assure customer satisfaction. Trevor Nichols repairs furniture for our owners. Nick Brewer does satellite and DVD repair (and training) at the customers' coaches in the campground. Ronnie Wigginton keeps parts supplied to the technicians in each bay. His knowledge of

Continued on page 61

Text and photography by Fred Thompson

DeMontrond in Houston

FIRST KNOWN FOR BUICKS – NOW IT'S TIFFIN MOTORHOMES



The DeMontrond name has been prominent in the Houston automotive market for over 58 years. But the story really began in 1948 on the campus of Southern Methodist University in Dallas when a pretty girl named Betty Hipp from Waxahachie competed with George DeMontrond, Jr. for a parking place. “She won,” George III said. “She was driving a Buick.” But a year later George Jr. won her hand in marriage.

George began working at her father’s dealership and in 1953 was awarded Houston’s second Buick dealership. George’s skill at building dealerships soon became a legend in the Houston region. Today the company has 15 franchises. George and Betty began their family in 1951 with the birth of George III. Even before he was a teenager, the youngster showed an interest in the business end of the dealership when he began doing accounting summaries for his father.

George’s math skills were not a flash in the pan. Eleven years later he graduated from Princeton with two bachelor’s degrees, one in engineering and one in economics. He returned to Texas—but not to join his father’s business. He was off to the University of Texas School of Law. “I’m sure my father thought I was a professional student, and I will have to admit that I did enjoy

going to school,” he said. After graduating from law school in 1976, George practiced briefly before being invited by his father to join the family business. Since 1953 George DeMontrond Jr. had been very successful in his automotive dealerships in the Greater Houston area and was appreciated for his civic involvement and philanthropy—a track that his son would also follow.

“When we moved in 1976 from the old Kirby Avenue location to our new location in North Houston,” George continued, “we realized that we had more land than we needed for the auto dealership. We decided to use the land to open a motorhome sales facility and I was tapped for the manager’s job. No fancy names—we just called it DeMontrond RV and it stuck. I found a 24-ft. Wilderness travel trailer to use for my office and ran a phone line across the street from the Buick dealership, attached it to a light pole beside my office-trailer, and ran it in a window to my desk. We were high tech!

“To look a little better and not embarrass my dad’s Buick dealership across the street, I found a used mobile office for \$286.85/month. Less than a year later we built a small shop and six service bays. All of our parts were still handled by the Buick automotive parts department. By 1978 we were selling 40 RVs a month, and 80 percent were motorhomes,” George said.

In January 1979, the president of a Texas oil company dropped his car off for service just before leaving on a business trip. As

Text and photography by Fred Thompson



Steve Smith, vice president and general manager, and George A. DeMontrond III, president, *at right*, met for a few moments with their sales staff just after the arrival of a 2012 Allegro Bus 43 QGP. *From left:* Gilbert Deleon, Rick Stautmeister, Mark Thayer, Dustin Blakley, Jerry Krudop, Kent Nord, Don Elkins, and Frank Barajas • Rhea Burdeaux, *kneeling*, found several of the service staff to join her for a picture. *From left:* Brandon Rogers, Wilson Kirksey, Brett Lewis, Jeannie Thompson, Danielle McAdams, Mike Skinner, and Mike Mayfield



and relied on our website. We simply quit spending money, period, if the expenditure did not directly cause a sale. Our saving grace was lower interest rates. The curtailment of floorplans also hurt our chances of survival. Several RV dealers in this part of Texas went bankrupt and closed.

“Finally, in the first quarter of 2010 we began to see an upturn trend and by the fourth quarter we were seeing positive results,” George explained.

“DeMontrond became a Tiffin dealer in 2001,” Steve said. “Bob Tiffin came and we had a big kick-off sales event. Our other stores in Texas City and Conroe focus on towables, Class C’s, and gas Class A’s. Of course, our store here in Houston is our flagship store and the primary marketplace in our franchise for Class A diesels.

“In the ten years that we have been a Tiffin dealer, we have been in Tiffin’s ‘Top 10 Dealers’ three times,” Steve said.

“This year Tiffin’s motorhomes are our leading Class A diesel product,” George noted. “During our 2011 model year (July 2010 – June 2011), our average turnover time for a Tiffin coach on our sales lot was 21 days. Our allotment from Tiffin was 95 percent diesel. We only received a gas coach when a customer specifically ordered it.

“Tiffin is our highest quality motorhome and is the main reason we like them so much,” George continued. “We know TMH owners are very loyal. It is interesting that before 2008, customers would come in and ask to look at diesel motorhomes, always speaking generally. Now they specifically ask to see Tiffin motorhomes. Maybe that is because Tiffin Motorhomes did not need to be bailed out!”

During DeMontrond’s 2011 model

a courtesy, George drove him to the airport. At the time the company had 85 motorhomes in stock and sales were brisk at 40 units a month. The oil company executive with unexplained insight advised George to pare down the inventory severely, indicating an oil crisis was impending.

“I took his advice and reduced our inventory to 35. In less than two months, our motorhome sales dropped to three units a month. At that time, most of the motorhome dealers in Houston were car dealers and they were caught with high inventories. I hired a ‘caretaker’ salesman for our RV lot and went back to the car business. It took a little longer for the Iran crisis to affect sales in our Buick franchise, but we went from selling 500 Buicks a month to 13 a month.”

The downturn lasted longer than most expected. Sadly, George DeMontrond, Jr. at 56 became a victim of heart disease. At just 33 years old George III stepped into

some big shoes and took over the company as president.

By 1986 the economy had improved and DeMontrond RV was thriving again. Two years later, George hired Steve Smith who rose to become the general manager of the automobile division and later the motorhome division where he continues today.

“In the 2007–2008 model year, we carried a \$30 million inventory into the downturn,” George said, continuing the story of the company. “Half of that inventory was motorhomes from Fleetwood, Monaco, and National RV, all of whom went into bankruptcy. We had to take a \$10,000 to \$30,000 loss per unit. We fell back on our car business to survive.

“We lost several sales consultants by attrition. But we did not lose any of our techs. Our service business thrived because owners were keeping their units instead of trading up to current models. We cut back on advertising in television and newspapers

year, the company sold 51 Tiffin coaches, a 100 percent increase over 2010. They expect their allotment for the 2012 model year will increase 50 to 100 percent.

As general sales manager for DeMontrond RV, Steve with some amazement explains Tiffin's success. "Just what has Bob Tiffin done to push the general satisfaction level so high with RVers?" he asked rhetorically. "Good quality. Great eye appeal. And the best quality-price point in the Class A market."

"With Tiffin Motorhomes' reputation in the motorhome market at large and the advertising we do in the Houston market, the customer usually sells himself before he gets to our location. It is perception," Steve continued. "The customer comes here *asking* to see Tiffin products."

George and his daughter Melissa promote the car side of the business and Steve does the advertising for the RV business. "DeMontrond has had the front page of the classified section of the Saturday Houston Chronicle since 1978," George said. Steve has found that television and the company's website is doing the job for DeMontrond RV.

"Our CBS and ABC stations reach an audience of 6.5 million in the Houston area," he said. "I do the television ads myself so that customers will recognize me when they come to the sales lot to look at motorhomes. Houston is the fourth largest city in the U.S. This is a great market!"

Using the company's website, Steve is focusing on creating a national presence. "Search engine optimization is very important in the motorhome business. A lot of our business is the high-end diesel market where buyers shop dealerships nationally. We are only 10 minutes away from one of the country's best and most accessible airports, and fares into Houston are remarkably cheap. We meet our customers at the airport, take them to a nearby hotel, and help them find the diesel coach that fulfills their dreams and meets their needs," he said.

"We have discovered that in our market the *Allegro* name is still the most important part of our Tiffin advertising. Our research shows that public recogni-

tion of the Tiffin name is not as high as the *Allegro* name," Steve said.

Although the major part of Steve Smith's job description focuses on generating sales, he is very candid and practical in recognizing that a good RV sales department would crumble without an equally good service and parts department. It was with a great deal of pride that he introduced me to Rhea Burdeaux whose business card simply says "Fixed Operations."

Rhea Burdeaux began her career with

DeMontrond Automotive Group in 1976. After serving for 18 years as the fixed operations manager for the automotive group's Conroe location, she was tapped in January 2009 for the fixed operations position at DeMontrond's flagship RV location in Houston. Her job includes the supervision of the parts and service departments and the body shop. Three departments with 35 employees report to her. "Service is service in both the automotive and RV businesses," she asserted.

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George DeMontrond III, president, and Steve Smith, vice president and general manager, discuss their strategy for marketing the new 2012 Allegro Bus 43 QGP. • Mark Lane, Tiffin regional sales manager, presents the Top 10 Dealer award for the 2011 model year to George DeMontrond as Steve Smith looks on. DeMontrond has been in the Tiffin Top 10 three times in recent years.

“I learned early in my career that you cannot go wrong if you are doing right by the customer.”

In DeMontrond’s service center, Rhea has three service advisors who take care of owners when they first arrive. She teaches a very customer-centered, personal approach to her service advisors. “You make a better judgment about a customer’s problem if you don’t try to pre-diagnose the problem when they begin to describe their difficulty. A service advisor must be a good listener. Sometimes half the problem is solved when you show empathy and offer sympathy. I want to get the customer involved with a ‘Come look at it with me.’ type of invitation. Show and tell will help solve the problem. What we sell is *tangible service*. Every one of our technicians has a digital camera and sends pictures of the problem and the repair to the service advisor. When the customer comes back to get his coach, the advisor with pictures can present a thorough explanation of the repair and how it was made. These pictures can also be sent to the customer if he is busy and can’t come by to approve the repair. The pictures also go into the customer’s permanent file for reference if a subsequent repair has to be made concerning the same problem. The idea started with warranty pictures and has enhanced the quality of our service,” Rhea said.

A fourth service advisor, Anthony Bridgewater, handles new coach preparation and delivery to the customer. He is trained in customer relations, warranty claims, and technical issues. Three service employees serve under Anthony to provide coach preparation and customer training to new owners.

Rhea pointed out that DeMontrond’s body shop technicians are trained in and using the new technology for water-borne paint. The technology required new equipment which is producing a much better paint job. The body shop is managed by Scott

Thompson. “We can also make basement doors with our new metal press,” Rhea said. “And we can do a complete roof replacement.”

In the chassis department, DeMontrond can do engine replacement, chassis alignment, generator replacement and repair, and ABS brake system repair.

The service department is certified by Aqua-Hot to repair hydronic heating systems. It can also handle service and replacement for propane tanks, holding tanks, tankless hot water heaters, and electric and hydraulic jacks. The service department can also do aftermarket installation of leveling jacks.

Burdeaux meets with the service advisors every morning at 7:30. Chris Wilson, fixed operations manager, works between the service advisors and the shop foremen to coordinate the assignments in each bay.

The parts department at DeMontrond, managed by Andrew Aguirre, has three counter people and one shipping/receiving clerk. With the company’s software, service advisors can track the progress of parts that have been ordered and received for repair jobs in progress. The advisor does periodic checks to assure the manufacturer or third party supplier has received the order and is handling it in a timely manner. The software gives the service advisors accessibility, but also accountability.

Rhea offered favorable evaluations of the service support that Tiffin Motorhomes provides to the DeMontrond dealership. “Tiffin is the best among our manufacturers in getting correct parts to us. To get an owner back on the road, they will ship parts to us overnight which is our call. With Tiffin’s service to dealers, there is no extra red tape with paperwork that slows down getting the part out quickly,” Rhea said. “If for some reason we cannot make a repair here at DeMontrond, the owner can go back to Red Bay to have his coach repaired. You usually cannot do that with other manufacturers. Tiffin tells us, ‘If you can’t fix it with our on-line help, we will send a driver, if necessary, and bring it to the Red Bay service center.’ Absolutely, no other manufacturer will do that.”

“Collectively, I think we can say that we are most proud of the excellent working relationship developed between sales and ser-

vice. In our meetings, we get their side of the world and they get our side of the world,” Rhea said. “After they sell it, that coach is our baby and we are going to take care of it. Everybody has taken ownership and that is great!”

In a business whose very existence depends on first class service to its clients, George DeMontrond III has followed in his father’s footsteps to find many avenues of public service. “We understand customer service as the foundation of our business and believe that public service and civic involvement is a responsibility of a successful company. When you are successful, you need to give back to the community. Civically engaged for the last 15 years, George serves on the board of the Greater Houston Partnership, one of the pre-eminent chambers of commerce in the U.S. He serves as chairman of the board of a regional university. In the 2000s, George spent most of his time as chairman of Houston 2012, the local effort to bring the Olympics to Houston. “We lost out to Chicago who eventually lost to Rio de Janiero,” George said. “But our effort to win the Olympics allowed us to put a mirror in front of our city and take an inventory of our physical, social, and economic structure. It was a good experience that will further our growth as a great American city. Houston has a lot of connections to world markets. We are a melting pot.”

George is a past vice president of the Houston Livestock

Show and Rodeo. His work to promote the annual event during the first three weeks of March each year earned him the recognition as “lifetime vice president.”

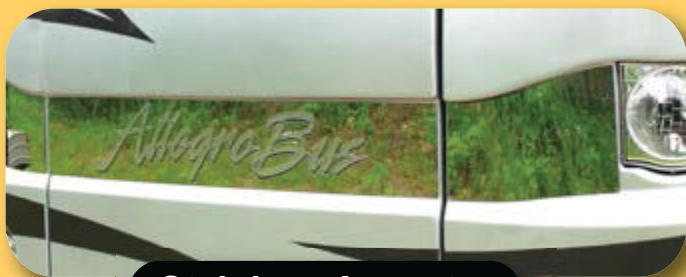
The upcoming show in 2012 will run from February 28 through March 18 and will be sold out every night. “For three weeks,” Steve said, “this event is bigger than NFL football. RVers from all over Texas and neighboring states will attend and it is a great time for DeMontrond RV to be there to serve them. It is an opportune time for our sales department, but it is really a good time for our service and parts departments to shine. RVers who are interested in 4-H, livestock shows, and the best in Texas rodeo should plan on attending,” Steve advised.

With enthusiasm, George continued the story. “Trail rides come in from hundreds of miles out in the state, wagons camp at Herman Park, and cook-offs take place before the rodeo at Reliant Park. It takes over 25,000 volunteers to bring it off. There will be nationally known top entertainment every night. Rodeo performers win big prizes.

“The whole purpose of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo is to generate funds for kids to go to college. Since 1932 over \$265 million has been awarded for college scholarships,” George said. He doesn’t get loud, but you know his efforts for

Continued on page 50

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“Under the Boardwalk”

By Mary Findley*

In 1964 the Drifters recorded a song titled “Under the Boardwalk.” The song’s story talks about walking on the roof of a building during the heat of the summer and the tar being so hot it burned their feet. To cool their heels, the man ‘sat with his baby on a blanket under the boardwalk.’ Your coach may lack a boardwalk but far below its hot roof sit bays that may need cooling off with a few organizational tips.

Bay areas: Tackle the underneath storage bays in the same way you take control of the inside cabinets. I’ve seen enough of those bays to know they stock an entire hardware and automotive supply store. One man’s bays contained six bottles of various waxes, seven cleaners, four bottles neither of us could figure out what they were for, three extension handles and a good dozen or more cleaning tools, gadgets and an abundance of who knows what.

The cleaners and wax were taken to the toxic waste dump due to their toxic chemical content. The waxes either contained petroleum distillates, carnauba wax or silicone. The wash and wax cleaner contained silicone so off it went to the dump along with the unidentifiable bottles. Neither of us had enough muscle to open two of his extension handles. His cleaning tools had come to the end of their usefulness and we cleared two more boxes of items that had not been used in over three years.

Decide what is essential, what could be essential and give the rest to a friend. The following is a basic survival guide. Expand as needed with great reserve.

Cleaners:

1. CleanEz, a concentrated general purpose cleaner that also removes grease and oil. Use it concentrated to remove any road grease. Dilute it to clean tires and wheels. It doubles to clean the interior.
2. Baby shampoo to wash the exterior – use #1 above if extra dirty.
3. Benya, a concentrated streak free window cleaner.
4. A sealant like RenewZt that removes water spots, scratches, oxidation and clears foggy or scratched headlights.
5. AlumiBrite but only if you have aluminum or mag wheels. It polishes and seals.
6. Advantage or protectant - never use a wax that contains carnauba, silicone or petroleum distillates. Look for polymer based protectants.
7. A lubricant like WD 40.
8. Silicone sealant to lubricate gaskets on the roof around vents and fans.

*Mary Findley is a veteran cleaning expert and can be reached through her website www.goclean.com or call 800-345-3934.

Be kind to our Earth and always buy concentrated cleaners that carry a certification like the Green Seal of Approval or the EPA seal of approval. You’ll find them in health food stores.

Must have tools:

1. Lambswool wash pad.
2. Double bladed soft foam rubber squeegee. I carry them but they are now available in various hardware stores as well.
3. Mary Moppins cleaning head. The Velcro type hook fasteners grab the loops in terry towels to prevent them from falling off.
4. A good fiberglass extension handle.
5. Microfiber pads to remove bugs from windshields.
6. Various tools, nails, bolts, nuts, wire, rope, bungee cords etc.
7. And a good dose of resistance like any time you see another cleaning tool on a stick. Leave the tool behind if it comes on a handle. Companies sell inexpensive handles along with a cleaning tool for the additional revenue. It benefits their bottom line but is a tragedy to our Earth. It wastes our natural resources and means hundreds of thousands of handles are dumped into the landfills. Most cleaning tools can be found less the handle and attach to standard threaded handles.

*Note: Mary Moppins carries all of the above including the cleaners.

At the hardware store pick up a supply of three-inch “C” clamps used to hold PVC pipes in place. They are half circles with a flat section at the end. Don’t forget the screws and plenty of Velcro hook fasteners.

Attach two “C” clamps to the upper section of a wall in the bay that contains cleaning supplies. Keep them level with each other. Place one “C” clamp close to the front of the bay and the other about three feet back, depending on the length of your bay. Slide your handles through the two “C” clamps. Secure two strips of Velcro hook fasteners around the handle toward the front of the bay so the fastener sticks to the wall. This prevents the handle from shifting as you travel.


Next head to a kitchen and bath supply store for mesh laundry bags. Attach a hook to the side of your bay wall. Store rags in the laundry bags and hang them from the hooks. Please don’t overstuff the bags or the weight could pull the hooks from the wall. Unless you like things that go bump during travel, secure the bags with a piece of Velcro around the middle and attach each end to the fabric wall.

Always check the wiring and plumbing diagrams of your coach before screwing anything into the walls.

While you are at the hardware store grab a couple of deep wire baskets with an opening at one end along with heavy duty plastic. Line the baskets with plastic and attach to the wall with the opening facing upward. They hold scrub pads and other light objects.

These are just a few ideas to jump start creative storage ideas. Meander through various areas of hardware stores and kitchen and bath stores with a fresh eye for problem-solving solutions. Hardware stores carry compartmental cases much like a fishing tackle box only they stack. Prevent pull out storage drawers from taking a flying leap during travel by securing them with Velcro.

Take cell phone pictures of each of your bays then measure each bay. Cell phone pictures help you recall what the bay contains and what type of storage device will free up space.

Side note: For those of you who have my cleaning head, the Velcro type hook fasteners stick to the fabric on the top or sides of the bay. Just do not locate them next to a heat source or they shrivel. 

Cummins RV Service Center: More Than an Engine Shop

By Marlin Saint

Cummins, known for its large truck, heavy equipment, and motorhome engine and generator repairs, has ventured into another field in the repair business.


Cummins engines, in the past few years, have become the primary engines in the motorhome industry. Tiffin Motorhomes, in Red Bay, Alabama, uses Cummins diesel engines in all of their larger motor homes.


As the motorhome industry grew, so did the need for motorhome repair shops. With this need in mind, Cummins decided to open a new kind of repair shop where they would repair not only the engines, but the motorhomes themselves. Some of these new shops are called Coach Care Facilities. There are approximately 43 such facilities across the United States today. However, not all Cummins RV shops are Coach Care Shops, but all Cummins RV shops can handle anything from small repairs to major over-hauls.

Cummins Mid South opened one such shop recently for all types of motorhome repairs, in Birmingham, Alabama, at 2200 Pinson Highway. This new RV facility has everything a customer is looking for in a repair shop. I made a couple of trips to Birmingham to help set up this new shop. Some of the features are as follows:


1. Full hook-up while waiting to be scheduled for your repairs.
2. Full Cummins generator repair shop.
3. Dump station.
4. Waiting room with a plasma TV and recliners to relax.
5. Game room to enjoy cards or puzzles.
6. Snack room with free coffee, drinks, and snack vending machines.
7. Full company store for RV items.

8. Picnic table.
9. Dog walk for pets.
10. Secured parking at night.
11. Six repair bays.
12. Three trained technicians.

Cummins has an ad in this issue of *Roughing It Smoothly* on page 73, with address and phone number for this shop. Remember if you need repairs while traveling I-65, I-59 or I-20 in Alabama, give this new Cummins RV Service Center in Birmingham, Alabama, a try. 



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The Red Bay Museum

Established in 2005 by the Red Bay Civitan Club, the museum located at 110 4th Avenue SE provides an overview of the town of Red Bay over the past one hundred years. Red Bay was incorporated in 1907 when the railroad began operation through the center of the small community. The museum annex offers a pictorial history of that momentous occasion, along with other artifacts from the early days of the railroad.

Also on display are recreations of landmarks from Red Bay's past, including the Red Bay Hotel, Bay Theater, Red Bay School, and Red Bay Depot. Other businesses are represented by displays showing a drug store soda fountain, a general merchandise store, and an early bank. Churches were an integral part of the developing years of Red Bay, as shown by interior architectural pieces and furnishings from several older church buildings. A reconstructed medical clinic features instruments and medical equipment used to diagnose and treat patients over the years. Furnished kitchens and living rooms bring back "the good old days," complete with wood cookstove, wringer washer, and radio.

A large exhibit area on the second floor is devoted to the life of Tammy Wynette, who claimed Red Bay as her hometown. Posters and scrapbooks chronicle her singing career, and many gowns she wore while performing are on display.

The museum is open on Tuesday and Thursday afternoon from 1:30 to 4:00. Adult admission is \$5.00. 



DEALER PROFILE *Continued from page 47*


this project will be relentless for as long as he can tell the story. "Currently 2,000 students are on show scholarships with a tuition and awards value of \$30 million. They are attending classes and working on their degrees at 100 Texas colleges. It is just phenomenal what the show and rodeo have done and continue to do," he said.

As president of DeMontrond RV, George works with Steve to set long-term goals and plans for the company's future. The implementation of the goals is accomplished through meetings at each management level until every employee understands how he can participate. Currently there are seven goals in the company's...

5-Year Plan

1. Better defined web presence. DeMontrond realizes that the buyer has changed. He is better prepared to buy, better informed about the product he wishes to buy.
2. The web is your front door. We will continue to be more informative and more accessible.

3. We will continue to improve our service capabilities.
4. We will implement programs to assure that we have well-trained technicians. We are recruiting techs now for future growth in our service function.
5. In the past our sales volume was considerably higher (\$50 million). We will return to that level.
6. We were humbled by the recession. We want to grow our business in a frugal and green approach.
7. On our website, our coach displays will be 360-degree walk-arounds, inside and out.

DeMontrond RV has won the confidence of its customers in the quality of its service. That confidence feeds repeat sales. The company's ability to draw new buyers both locally and nationally through its web portal has proven that its investment in advertising technology is paying off. Tiffin Motorhomes looks forward to DeMontrond's strong presence in the Greater Houston market. 

Tiffin Motorhomes Celebrating 40th Anniversary with 2012 Models

Red Bay, Alabama – In 1941, Alex Tiffin began Tiffin Supply Co., a lumberyard and general merchandise store in Red Bay. From that business start-up, two more generations of Tiffins and more than 55,000 RV owners have profited by the Tiffin family’s strong sense of customer service. That customer service helped make Tiffin Motorhomes the success story it is today.

With the introduction of its 2012 models, Tiffin Motorhomes, Inc. marks its 40th anniversary as a family-owned business. Bob Tiffin started the company in Red Bay in 1972. Today, Tiffin Motorhomes is a leading manufacturer of Class A recreational vehicles. The

Phaeton was the top-selling brand of Class “A” diesel motorhomes in 2010. Tiffin’s Allegro Bus, Allegro RED, and Allegro Breeze were also among the top five best-selling diesel pushers. Tiffin models also include the moderately priced Allegro brand, as well as the top-of-the-line 45-foot Zephyr.

Today dealers across the U.S. and Canada sell the well-engineered units built at the Red Bay plant. Tiffin Motorhomes is respected for its product quality, customer service and a strong relationship between dealer and manufacturer.

“This year, Tiffin Motorhomes proudly celebrates our 40th year of building the finest

motorhomes on the road,” said General Manager Tim Tiffin. “We want to thank everyone who has been part of our journey, from our dedicated team to our wonderful customers. As we celebrate 40 years and continue to strive to exceed the expectations of our customers, we look forward to celebrating our 50th anniversary in 2022.”

As part of the 40th anniversary celebration, Tiffin has incorporated its familiar logo into one recognizing the company’s 40 years in business. The logo was designed by Lewis Communications in Birmingham.

– Wayne Williams
Director of Marketing

ALLEGRO BREEZE®



1



3a



2



3b

Interior Decor

Fossil, Maui, Summer

Exterior Paint

Gold Coral, Maroon Coral, Rocky Mountain Brown, Silver Sand, Sunlit Sand

New Features (pictured at left)

1. Stain and finish of dinette table now matches cabinetry
2. Galley sink upgraded to recessed double bowl with solid surface covers
3. Bedroom TV drops down from ceiling over bed

New Features (Not shown)

- Added 110v outlets in wall corners above dinette
- High gloss finish featured on all cabinets
- On 28 BR fridge upgraded from 6 to 8 cu.ft.

Because the interior decor trim levels of the Allegro and Allegro RED are the same or similar, the photos of the upgrades represent changes in both brands.

Interior Decor

French Roast (new), Marble, Raven (new)

Exterior Paint

Gold Coral, Maroon Coral, Rocky Mountain Brown, Silver Sand, Sunlit Sand

New Features (pictured below)

1. Updated window treatments with new valances
2. High efficiency LEDs replace halogen lights in ceiling
3. Heat duct registers behind hide-a-bed option raised 24 inches for better heat circulation
4. Window fan control added to the passenger-side console
5. New solid surface backsplashes

6. New edge profile enhances solid surface countertop
7. Recessed cooktop with covers streamlines galley workspace
8. New design for slide-out fascias
9. Potable water fill outlet in passenger side exterior wall
10. New LCD rear monitor with color rear and side cameras
11. Separate sprayer handle for galley faucet

12. Full-length hinges for cast aluminum storage doors

New Features (Not shown)

- New bench dinette design converts to child's bed
- Side light windows in BR slide-out
- High gloss finish featured on all cabinets





Interior Decor

Capri (new), Palmetto (new),
White Diamonds

Exterior Paint

Gold Coral, Maroon Coral,
Rustic Canyon, Rocky Mountain
Brown, Silver Sand, Sunlit Sand

New Features (pictured below)

1. Ceiling molding with iron scrollwork
2. Soft fabric inserts in new valance designs, matching iron scrollwork
3. Convenient storage drawer in step well
4. Gear shift panel relocated for fingertip control in driver's console

5. Side view cameras integrated into VelVac mirrors
6. Courtesy LED lights in step well
7. New handheld shower head with on-off switch
8. Passenger slide-out work table with storage compartment

New Features (Not shown)

- High gloss finish featured on all cabinets

- Upgraded BR headboard design with secure backers
- Potable water fill outlet in passenger side exterior wall
- 12-inch nickel-plated appliance pull on cabinet beneath sink
- New fascia design for slide-outs
- High efficiency LEDs in recessed ceiling lights



ALLEGRO BUS®

Interior Decor

Creme Brûlée, Milan (new),
Tour de France (new), Fabrics by
Ralph Lauren (new)

Exterior Paint

Gold Coral, Maroon Coral,
Rocky Mountain Brown, Silver
Sand, Sunlit Sand

New Features (pictured below)

1. Soft fabric inserts in new valance designs
2. Gear shift panel relocated for fingertip control in driver's console
3. New headboard design
4. New fascia design with double crown molding for slide-outs
5. Handmade polished porcelain blacksplash
6. New driver's & passenger's chairs with firmer back support
7. More luxurious sofa design
8. Heat duct registers behind hide-a-bed option raised 24 inches for better heat circulation

9. Painted window frames with flush-mount windows
10. Induction cooktop with optional all-electric coach
11. Sound bar with exterior television

New Features (Not shown)

- New design for recessed ceiling molding
- High gloss finish featured on all cabinets
- Convenient storage drawer in step well
- Side view cameras integrated into VelVac mirrors
- Passenger slide-out work table with storage compartment
- Potable water fill outlet in passenger side exterior wall
- New handheld shower head with on-off switch
- High efficiency LEDs in recessed ceiling lights
- Handsome iron work on pocket doors
- Chrome door handles for entrance door & storage compartments
- Double Paramount Carefree awnings on 43-ft. floorplans (see page 8)



Keith and Rosalind Howe

IT WAS TIME TO LEAVE HOME AND MAKE A CHANGE

“When I needed a haircut, my mother sent me to the barber’s house a half mile from where I went to school in Belvedere, Kent County, England,” Keith began. “It was 1944 and the Germans were still bombing England, but we had not experienced any attacks in Belvedere in months. We lived on Heron Hill and could see across the marsh to River Thames where the Ford plant was located. It had never been hit in the bombings. As I took a short cut across the field, a V2 rocket came in and leveled the block where I had just been at the barber’s house.”



Born in 1938, many of Keith Howe’s early memories are about the war, and school was not a place that created happy memories either. “I hated school and started doing farm work when I was 11, looking after horses and hand milking. Even before I was a teenager, I began riding and exercising horses, something I continued until 1991. I loved working outside and quit school at 15 in 1953 to work full time on a farm. I did hedging and ditching, any farm work they had for me. Military service was required then and I served two years in the army.”

Looking for a more stable career, Keith in 1959 took evening classes to prepare for insurance exams. “When I passed the exams, I was hired by an insurance company which gave me my book that consisted of all the people in a certain geographic district. When you sold a policy, you collected the premiums and got a percentage. Using his book, the agent develops a steady income and has the potential to increase his income with more sales. If you wish to get out of the insurance business, you can sell your book. I started my own brokerage business in 1968 and continued with it for 10 years. But one day I was offered a good sum for the whole thing, and I took it,” he smiled.

Keith Howe’s business acumen had grown considerably since he quit school in 1953, proving that a keen intellect will find opportunities and make the best of them. Having acquired solid experience with horses during the years he worked as a hired hand on farms, Keith was attracted to saddlery (tack shop). The business brought him into contact with a well-heeled clientele who could afford to spend generously on tack for their horses.

“I actually opened my first shop in the hallway of my home. There were 18 shops in the area,” he recalled. “When I decided to get into the wholesale end of the business, there were only five saddlery shops, and I owned two of them,” he explained. “I bought a van and sold to shops. It increased my volume tremendously and allowed me to take my profit earlier in each product’s cycle.

“I was finding other ways to expand my business interests. My British driving license qualified me to drive everything but a steamroller,” he laughed. “So I began driving a horsebox, an air conditioned trailer that hauls six horses. English farms breed

Text and photography by Fred Thompson

and sell a lot of fine horses. I took horses out to the continent and often as far as Italy. I drove on the Appia Antica, the oldest road in Rome.”

Keith bought 21 acres that was split by the M2 Motorway. “Part of it was a dump, but I built an RV park which turned out to be quite successful,” he said. But somehow his business interests kept coming back to horses. And a common interest in horses brought about his meeting Rosalind. “She was boarding horses and teaching riding at Whitstable on the coast. We were seeing the same friends at horse shows and were introduced.”

Their common interests eventually let to two partnerships: marriage and a horse farm. “We bred horses for show jumping and cross country,” Roz said. “It’s an intensive operation. You have to ride them two to three hours a day. We were starting at 5 a.m. and going until dark.”

“We made good money,” Keith noted. “We were selling 30 horses annually from our four mares and the foals we were buying from other mares that we were boarding. But one cold day I got disgusted. It was June 21, 1991. I was cold, wet, and tired and I said to Roz, ‘I am not getting on a horse again, ever!’ And I didn’t.” Roz was laughing as she remembered the incident. She continued the operation.

The Howes still had their saddlery business, and Keith continued to contract fencing work. They also developed a business buying wood shavings and shredded used paper in bales to sell to horse farms for bedding the stalls.

“In 1992 one of our employees, Mark, insisted that I come with him to a sporting shoot. He furnished the guns and shells for me to take a turn at it,” Keith related. “Sporting shooting requires a natural motion and coordination. I shot several practice rounds and then entered and won the Class B competition. Roz got into it, too, and we both were hooked.”

The Howes had been keeping their tack shop open seven days a week, but in 1992 they started closing on Sundays to engage in their newfound passion. “Finally, in 1994 we got fed up with rude and demanding customers and closed the business,” he said. “We had several buildings which we sold to a firm that makes windows and doors. It was a good sale. But we kept our 78-acre farm and continued raising horses until 1998.”

It is not unusual for homes and buildings in England to be hundreds of years old and still in everyday use. The building which housed their tack shop in Tunbridge Wells was built in 1503. “It was actually two houses that had been joined together and was a tack shop long before we bought it,” Keith explained. “We rented it at first and then bought it in 1989. We still own it. It’s a little piece of history that I enjoy. All of the big timbers in the shop came out of ships and there’s not a nail in it. They burned holes in the timbers and put them together with wooden pegs. It has a clay tile roof, and it had a dirt floor when

we bought it. We added a wood floor. The second floor has oak planks of various widths, also held together with wooden pegs.”

Keith’s first place in the Class B sporting shooting competition opened a new chapter in his life and Roz found that she, too, was really enjoying the sport. A friend they met at a shooting event invited them to go with him to the World Skeet Shoot in Savannah in 1992. With borrowed guns, Keith placed second in the Class C competition.

Keith was becoming more annoyed with increased zoning regulations and taxation that was taking a larger bite every year. “If you wanted to change the color of your house, it could take up to two years to get an approval to do that,” he lamented.

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They returned to the U.S. in 1993 for the World Skeet Shooting competition in San Antonio. “We came in using a B2 visa which allowed us to stay for six months,” he related. “By 1997 we were looking for a way to leave England permanently. I was disgusted with excessive government paperwork forced on businesses, the VAT (value added tax), general income taxes, and absurd zoning regulations.”

On their next visit to the U.S. the Howes engaged legal help. “We were able to get extensions on our B2 status and we decided to locate in the San Antonio area,” Keith continued. “I was told that if a foreigner launched a business and provided ten jobs in the economy, he would have a good chance of being able to apply for citizenship. I bought 7.5 acres covered with scrubby cedar, an old house and 13 abandoned cars. We cleaned it up and surveyed the property for 27 home sites. We built two houses for sale and sold the other lots. Unfortunately, I paid our labor as independent contractors and filed 1099s and that failed to satisfy the requirement of providing 10 jobs.”

Keith and Roz did not give up. They purchased five acres and

Keith began loading his own shells in 2000 after realizing how much he could save. Ever the entrepreneur, he began loading shells for friends, and then launched a new business where he and Roz sell at 10 to 12 skeet shoots per year. • With two luggage slide-outs, the 43 QGP allows Keith to take quite a load to skeet shoots. • Roz fell in love with the skilled craftsmanship of Native Americans in New Mexico and launched her own jewelry business.

built a comfortable two bedroom, two bath home in Boerne with the intention of finding a way to become U.S. citizens. They connected with an attorney in California who specializes in guiding successful foreign entrepreneurs on their quest to obtain U.S. citizenship. “We first received an Investment E2 Visa which was good for 2.5 years and now we are into a 5-year Investment E2 Visa,” Roz explained. “Now we are finally in a category where we can apply for U.S. citizenship.”

Skeet shooting has become a business as much as a hobby. “I started loading my own shells in 2000 and soon had friends who wanted to buy their shells from me,” Keith said. “I could save them 30 percent and still make a decent profit.” His entrepreneurial blood was driving him into yet another business and one can easily see that he thoroughly enjoys it.

“We bought our first motorhome in 1999 in Boerne, Texas, and during the next six years went through four coaches and three brands with increasing dissatisfaction,” Keith grimaced.

After considerable research and investigation, Keith and Roz bought a 2007 43-foot Allegro Bus. “It made our travel to 10 to 12 skeet shooting competitions so much easier and enjoyable,” Roz said. “We have to take so much when we go.”

Although they do not have horses anymore, they both still have a great love of animals. “Sparky, a Jack Russell Terrier, and Ellie, a Vigelar Labrador, travel with us wherever we go,” Roz said.

Taking care of his new acquisition was important so Keith built a 30 × 60-ft. metal building to keep the Bus from baking in the Texas sun. At one end of the structure, he built an air conditioned workshop to load shells for his customers. His inventory fills deep shelves on one side of the building. Along the outside wall, Keith positioned three 2500-gallon tanks to collect and save water from the roof of the metal building. “The water is so hard here that you can’t wash the Bus or the car without white droplets drying on the surface,” he said. “Rain water, of



course, is soft and makes the wash job so much easier. We also use it to water our plants when the drought regulations ban the use of city water.”

Last year Roz and Keith bought their second Allegro Bus, this time the 43QGP with rear bath and a half. They are both thrilled with the quality of Tiffin coaches as well as the company’s service philosophy. With typical British civility, Keith offers his thoughts about the company. “Bob Tiffin is first a gentleman. It is almost an honor to own one of his motorhomes,” he said. “He treats everyone like family. When you get to Red Bay, you realize the whole plant is based on ‘customer care.’ Bob Tiffin has a totally different concept for running his business, and it is obviously working. When we get to skeet shoots, we show our motorhome frequently and tell people about Tiffin Motorhomes. In the first year we owned our 2007 coach, eleven people purchased Tiffin coaches after we showed them our coach and related our experiences. No kidding.

“Here is what I tell people,” Keith continued with enthusiasm. “If you buy another make, you’ll make a big mistake.” When discussing other Class A manufacturers, he says, “A year and a day, go away.”

In 2007 Roz won the U.S. Open in the ladies class, high overall (see picture below), and placed third in the 12-gauge event. “While it is still a great sport that we both enjoy, the business has gotten larger than we ever anticipated,” Roz said. “To go to the World Shoot in San Antonio, it takes three trailers and the motorhome,” Keith explained. “We travel from February to October. Then we go to Albuquerque. The High Desert RV Park is our R&R place. It has wonderful management and the rate is just \$110/week plus electricity.”



In addition to selling shells at skeet shoots, Roz found a niche business that she enjoys year round. “I buy Indian jewelry in Albuquerque and then sell it at the skeet competitions. Some of the Indian people are so talented. Their homes are immaculate. My favorite jewelry artist is Joe. He has been making jewelry since he was seven. Now 89, Joe fought in World War II. His jewelry is very expensive because he is so skilled,” Roz said.

Do you miss England? I asked. “Yes, sometimes I do. My parents are both 90 and still live in England,” Roz said. “We talk every week. However, because of our visa and citizenship issues, it is not advisable for us to leave the U.S. now. Keith thinks of the U.S. as home and has not been to England since 2003.”

“I love it here,” Keith said with that wonderful British accent that we westerners enjoy hearing. “Government regulations and taxes are so much more favorable here in the U.S. than in England. The country is so big and there is so much to do and see here.” **RIS**

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Mount Hood, Oregon, Early Summer Rally June 7–9, 2011 by Gail Johnson

There could be no more perfect time to be in northwestern Oregon than early June. Leaving temperatures hitting 100 in Alabama, we were delighted with 75 and 80 degree highs, and lows in the 50s when we got to Oregon. Additionally, many species of flowers were in bloom, including the beautiful rhododendrons, which were at their peak and were truly breathtaking!

Our rally location was Mount Hood Village RV Resort in Welches, Oregon . . . about an hour's drive from Portland. The natural beauty of the location alone made the trip worthwhile; we were literally in the shadow of snow-covered Mt. Hood, and the spectacular Columbia River Gorge was only a few minutes' drive away. But in addition to the stunning scenery, the hospitality, fun, and fellowship that Allegro Club members enjoyed at the rally truly made it one to remember!

This rally began on Tuesday, with registration and orientation on-going through the afternoon. B. Young RV of Portland was our dealership partner, and they hosted a "Meet-and-Greet" mixer in their impressive motorhome display area, where attendees were invited to mix and mingle while enjoying simple refreshments and viewing new Tiffin products. Later in the evening, B. Young also sponsored a delicious dinner, capping off our first night in the rally.

Day two of the rally began with a water aerobics class and a hearty breakfast in the Pavilion. Following that, and throughout the day, various seminars, displays, and demonstrations covering a wide and diverse range of topics drew the attention of rally attendees.

Regarding care and maintenance of the RV, there were presenters from Triple H Electronics (David Humphries and Marty Vanderford), JVC (Bo Lamar), Blue Ox (Dave Cartaglia), Aqua Hot (David Patton), Norcold (Nathan Richard), Onan and Power Glide (Harold Kimbrough), Cummins (Rick Garlitz), and Tom Webber with Tiffin Motor Homes dealer support.

Other programs and presenters of general interest were: Local Artist Display (Claudia Nice), Convection-Microwave Cooking (Gail Johnson), "Just for the Shine of It"-Outside Cleaning (Mary Moppins), "Going Green" (Pat Webber), and Afternoon Tea (Gail Johnson).


An abundance of interesting and useful information was available at Wednesday's events, and the busy day was again concluded with a delicious catered meal and entertainment in the Pavilion by a popular Country-Western band, The California Cowboys.

On Thursday, members were again treated to three good meals, with various activities interspersed between them. The morning provided one more cleaning seminar with Mary Mop-

pins, and a lively Line Dance class with Joanne Bauer. Through lunch, and afterward, we were treated to entertainment by a great live band—The Fabulous Farelans. The theme was "Flash-back to the 50's and 60's", and several couples came dressed for the occasion! Later in the afternoon, games were made available....Bingo, Ladder ball, and Minute-to-Win-it attracted several players and provided good fun and laughs for all who participated. At the farewell dinner Thursday night, winners of the games were announced, chapters in attendance were recognized, the week was reviewed, thank-you's were handed out, and good-bye's were said.

Friday morning, many were still seen visiting the B. Young display and lingering to greet Bob Tiffin, the company's founder and CEO. He and his wife Judy were in attendance at the rally and were available to renew acquaintances with long-time owners and meet new ones.

The Mt. Hood Rally was deemed a great success by all who gave us feedback; it was a perfect example of what we aim to accomplish at every Tiffin Rally: 1. to see a part of this beautiful country in which we live; 2. to meet other Tiffin owners and enjoy getting to know them; 3. to see first-hand the newest Tiffin motorhomes; 4. to gain valuable knowledge about the RV lifestyle and other interesting topics; 5. to enjoy good food and fellowship; 6. to have fun and make memories together. At Mt. Hood Village, mission accomplished!

Our wish for you is that you may enjoy safe travels, and that we will see you down the road someday soon, "Roughing It Smoothly"! 

2012 RALLY SCHEDULE

TIFFIN MOTORHOMES SARASOTA BUDDY RALLY

March 1-3, 2012 (Check out March 4)
Sarasota County Agricultural Fairground
Sarasota, Florida

TIFFIN MH / LA MESA RV DESERT CLASSIC RALLY

March 27-29, 2012 (CHECK OUT March 30)
Palm Creek Golf & RV Resort
Casa Grande, Arizona

TIFFIN MANAGEMENT TEAM *Continued from page 42*

parts is critical in getting the right parts to the technicians when they need them. The service building is 150 yards long and that keeps his electric delivery cart in constant motion," he laughed.

"One of the most important things we do when a coach comes in for service is proper maintenance to prevent water leaks," Wade explained. "Water can do so much damage so quickly. We also check every coach that comes in for the Norcold recall that covers 1996 to 2010. We do the kit that corrects that problem."

The Service Center currently has in progress a major project to photograph every part in their inventory and put them online with corresponding parts numbers. "This will assure almost complete accuracy in selection of parts," he observed.


"Heading up the Service Center has been a great opportunity for me. I really enjoy the challenge and it is gratifying to know that we are helping our customers achieve their dreams for travel," Wade said. "It is a stressful job but it is very rewarding."

Wade rises at 4:45 and is usually in his office by a quarter after six. It is unusual for him to leave before four. So how does Wade Humphres defuse stress? "I love to fish on weekends and evenings, too, in the summer and fall. We have a stocked pond

on the 15 acres where our home is located and a nice lake on 28 acres farther out in the country," he said. "Of course, everyone around here that likes to fish has a bass boat. I like to put in at either of the TVA lakes here in the county. We are really blessed with nice recreational areas."

Wade and Linda are very active in Grace Baptist Church where he serves as a deacon. The church does outreach work in natural disasters like Katrina and the tornadoes that struck in Franklin County earlier this year. "We set up a kitchen to feed workers, unload trucks, or just clean highway debris and fallen trees that are blocking the roads. Whatever is needed," he explained.

Wade also enjoys playing bass guitar in a gospel band that performs at churches, festivals, and other public gatherings. I got to hear them at the Founders Day Festival on the square in Red Bay on Saturday, September 17. They delivered an inspiring rendition of "Because He Lives" to an appreciative audience.

Let's all hope that good fishing and weekends like this keep the stress melted away. The Tiffin Service Center continues to build the company's national reputation for great service. As one dealer put it recently, "Sales will crumble in this business if you don't have good service." 

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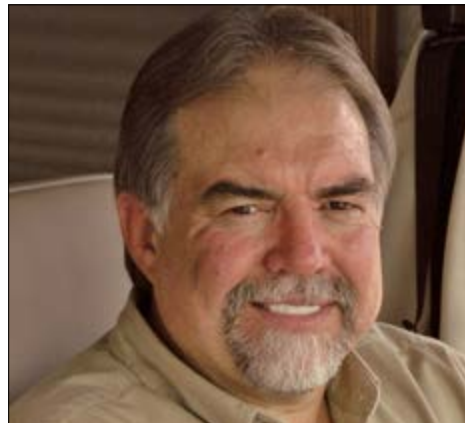
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Inman's Answers

As the editor of "Serious Tech Talk," Danny Inman, 38-year veteran with Tiffin Motorhomes, invites your questions.

Please use the attached postcard and send Danny your questions about your motorhome and its operation, especially those questions that may be useful to all of our readers. If you need more space, address your letter to:

Danny Inman
Roughing It Smoothly
PO Box 1738
Monroe, GA 30656-1738

Danny would also like to hear your ideas, suggestions, and innovations that would make our motorhomes more useful and functional. If you have a photograph to send, please put the postcard and photo in an envelope and send it to the same address. Please send a SASE if you would like for us to return your photographs, disk files, or manuscript.

We look forward to seeing this column grow larger with each issue. For *answers to urgent questions and problems*, call the Parts and Service number at 256-356-0261.

Dear Danny . . .

Finding a Ground Short in Water Pump

We have a 2008 Allegro Bus. The water pump has a short somewhere in the ground. It started out to be intermittent. Now it will not come on at all unless I disconnect the ground wire and connect it to a ground. Then the pump is always live and the lights at the pump switch do not come on.

Is it caused by a broken ground? If so,

where do I look for the end of the ground wire? Also the lights for the three bottom switches on the panel on the left as you enter the coach do not light up. Please tell me how to fix that. Thanks.

Bryan Rostie
Gravelbourg, Saskatchewan

Dear Bryan,
The pump is operated by a multi-purpose control board located behind the panel at the dump station. The wires from each pump switch in the coach connect to the circuit board. Turning on a pump switch activates the ground and starts the pump. Changing this board should solve your problem. It can be ordered from our parts department.

Reclining the Passenger Chair While Underway

We have a 2010 Phaeton 36QSH. When we are traveling, the passenger seat will not go forward enough to allow the seat back to recline to a comfortable position and still use the footrest. The seat back hits the side of the slide-out. Is there a way the seat can be altered to move forward several inches more to allow a better reclining angle to the seat back?

Don Tawzer
Pikeville, Tennessee

Dear Don,
The bolts holding the seat stand to the motorhome floor are welded into the coach's frame. We cannot recommend moving the seat stand forward because of safety certifications and regulations that we have to follow. In order to make the slide-outs as large as possible, we have limited the reclining area for the seat. We are sorry that it has caused an inconvenience for you.

When to Replace Tires

How important are dry cracks in the sidewalls of my tires? I have a 2004 Allegro Bay with the original tires which have a DOT manufactured date of 2003. The tires still hold air. My dealer thought

they needed to be replaced due to dry rot cracking on the sidewalls.

Buddie Baldrée
Troy, Michigan

Dear Buddie,
In the RV world we have found that sidewall deterioration usually occurs before the tread wear demands replacement. That is simply because most of us do not put the miles on our motorhomes as quickly as we do on our cars. Both Michelin and Goodyear have websites that show pictures of the degrees of deterioration and when replacement is recommended. It sounds like you need to replace your tires.

Keeping Battery Acid Corralled

I would like to suggest that a rubberized or poly-coated tray be put under the batteries at the time coach is manufactured. If the batteries boil over, the acid tends to corrode the present metal tray. I put a rubber mat underneath my batteries after spraying with a rust preventive paint.

Ken Mercer
Village Mills, Texas

Dear Ken,
Thanks for your suggestion. For the model year 2012, we designed a thermoplastic liner which inserts into a powder-coated metal tray. We believe this will prevent corrosion problems. Your solution will solve your problem and we will recommend it to other owners.

Battery Acid Build-Up

We own a 2007 Phaeton 36QSH with the original Interstate house batteries. (1) What is the proper water fill level? (2) How can I prevent battery acid (white flaky stuff) from building up and eating my battery hold-down brackets? The accumulation also gets on the compartment door. Thanks.

Andy Pancarik
Escondido, California

Dear Andy,
The correct water level is approximately

1-inch from the top edge of the battery. Coat the battery leads and brackets with Dielectric grease which you can buy at parts stores. Also, if you leave it plugged in during storage, be sure to check and see if the inverter is set properly for charging the battery.

Suggestions from Owners

We have been enjoying our 2006 Allegro 35 TSA with the Workhorse chassis. Here are a few suggestions for simple changes to the "flight deck" that could be made for a more enjoyable driving experience:

- More easily readable display screen (3/4 x 1 1/2 inch is too small for most users)
- Outside temperature and compass
- Tire pressure sensor
- GPS
- Altimeter
- Barometer
- Wind speed and direction indicator
- Easier access to under-dash fuse pack

Are any of these items available in your current units? An option package to include them all would be great.

Tom Burriss
Lincoln, California

Dear Tom,
As I am sure you know, all of the above items could be built into one optional package. But it would be expensive and we do not anticipate that enough units would be sold to justify the development expense. Two of the items (temp/compass and GPS) are already available on our coaches. Except for a larger display screen, the other items can be purchased aftermarket.

Insulating Lines to HWH Jacks

You answered a question regarding HWH jacks in one of your recent columns. I have a 2004 Allegro 32 BA on a Workhorse chassis. In hot weather while traveling, the HWH "jacks-down" warning light for the passenger-side front jack would come on when the jacks were in "store mode." The hydraulic hose for that jack is routed across the bottom of the radiator and along the

frame between the engine and the right front wheel to the jack. The hose is subjected to a tremendous amount of heat.

I solved the problem by cutting the wire ties that secured the line and wrapping the hose with heavy duty aluminum foil from the HWH pump to the right front jack. This idea was given to me by a marine mechanic who wrapped fuel lines that were too close to inboard V-6 carbureted engines causing them to vapor lock. The heavy aluminum foil provided a shield from the engine's heat.

William L. Jones
Mt. Juliet, Tennessee

Dear William,
Thank you for your suggestion. We think your solution will solve similar problems for other owners.

Finding the Diagnostic Plug

We have a 2003 Allegro Bus 40TGP. I want to install the Silverleaf Engine Monitor, which needs to connect into the 6-pin diagnostic plug. I found the plug in the engine compartment, but I can't locate the diagnostic plug that is supposed to be under the dash. Three questions: (1) Is the diagnostic plug buried in the cable bundles? (2) If so, where do I look? (3) If not in the cable bundles, where is it?

Mike Eppler
Wasilla, Alaska

Dear Mike,
There are two diagnostic plugs on the Freightliner chassis, one of which you have already found.

The second one should be located in the wiring harness close to the steering column. If this has never been pulled down for use, it could still be laying on the A-frame for the steering column. Sometimes the easiest way to find it is to remove the speedometer panel from the front of the dash to gain access to it.

Door Closer Rips Out of Fiberglass

The door closer on our 2008 Allegro Bay 35TSB has ripped out of the fiberglass



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above the door. It was repaired at the 2010 Rally in Hemet, but it has ripped out again. It is now disconnected to prevent further damage. What do you suggest?

Bill & Karen Meers

San Luis Obispo, California

Dear Bill & Karen,

The door shock (closer) was added to prevent the door from interfering with the operation of the patio awning arm. Probably the best solution would be to replace the bent or damaged shock with a new one, but use larger mounting screws that attach it to the wall of the motorhome.

Replacing Headlight Bulbs in a 1997 Allegro

I have a 1997 28½-ft. Allegro. How do you change the bulbs in the lights without breaking the lenses front and back? Also, how do you repair the rear upper body of the coach? It is cracked. This has been a very good coach. I have owned it for 10 years.

John R. Patterson

Dracut, Massachusetts

Dear John,

The 1997 should not have a sealed-beam type headlight. A housing holds a replaceable bulb that can be removed with a quarter turn counter-clockwise and then pulled out. You can reach the housing through the hood access in the front cap.

Using Aux Start Blows Fuses

I have a 2008 Allegro Bay 37QDB. The fuse between the two house batteries blows every time I try to use the Aux Start after the main batteries are down from setting up. The fuse is AMG 250. Is this the correct fuse? We replaced it with the same fuse type that came with the coach. Is there anything I can do to prevent this problem? Am I doing something wrong? Thanks for your help.

Steve England

Magnolia, Texas

Dear Steve,

I do not recommend replacing the 250-amp fuse with a larger one because a

short in the system could possibly melt some wires before the fuse would blow. I assume that your Bay has the diesel engine. The starting amperage for diesel is a lot higher than gas. If the engine batteries are completely dead, then hold the Aux Start button down for 5 to 10 minutes before trying to start the motorhome. This will allow the engine battery to charge up and equalize and assist the house battery in starting the engine. This should prevent the fuse from blowing.

Allegro Bay Instrument Panel Shuts Off

I have a 2006 Allegro Bay 38 TDB. The instrument panel shuts down once or twice a day during travel, but always comes back on. Workhorse rejected any responsibility and said I should call Tiffin. I hope you can help.

Dale Vaughn

Colville, Washington

Digital Display Goes Blank Occasionally

I have a 2005 Allegro 32 BA on the Workhorse chassis with 20,000 miles. I notice the digital display goes blank occasionally. After a few seconds, it comes back. Is there anything to worry about long term?

Alvey Westling

Arlington, Washington

Dear Dale and Alvey,

To determine where the problem is when the panel shuts off, check the plug-in with a volt meter or a 12-volt test light on the back of the instrument cluster to see if it has power. If it does have power, the problem will be within the Workhorse instrument cluster. If it does not have power, it will likely be a loose ground. The main ground for the Workhorse wiring harness is located on the A-frame holding the steering column. Also check the ground between the engine and the chassis rail. Hopefully this will solve your problem.

Response to Sway Bar Recommendation

We saw you at Davis Motorhomes in Memphis earlier this year when they

featured the Allegro Breeze in a show. We asked about putting air bags on our 2006 Allegro 32BA with a Ford chassis. You suggested that Camping World had a sway bar we might consider. We had it installed and it is great! Thanks. We really enjoy our Allegro Open Road. It is our fifth motorhome and our second Tiffin. We are sold on Tiffin products and especially your service.

Joe & Geneva Calvert

Forrest City, Arkansas

Dear Joe & Geneva,

Thanks for the feedback. I'm glad the suggestion worked.

Clothes Jumping Off the Hanging Rod — One More Time

I know it sounds crazy, but if you turn all your clothes hangers so the hooks face the front of the motorhome, the clothes will not "jump" off the rod. Someone told us to try it five years ago and we haven't had a problem since. Thanks for your interesting column.

Charles Carter

Sioux Falls, SD

Dear Charles,

We have had a lot of suggestions to solve this problem. Yours sounds as if the "physics" works.

Repairing the Flush Pedal on Toilet

I have a 1992 Allegro. It has a Thetford toilet that is operated with a flush pedal. It is stuck and will not go down to flush it. If this is not too difficult to repair, I will do it myself. Can you provide any diagrams for taking it apart?

Charles Engle

Pasadena, Texas

Dear Charles,

The paperwork that came with the toilet hopefully is still in your motorhome. It has a diagram of the toilet's parts. There are two half-inch bolts that hold the toilet to the floor. One is in the very back and the other is behind the pedal. Once you get the toilet out where you can work

on it, use the diagram to disassemble the foot valve which may have to be replaced.

Downshifting the Breeze

In vol. 8, no. 3 of *RIS*, you responded to Randy and Maxine from California concerning downshifting the Breeze in mountain driving. I have the same problem and I can only downshift to 4th gear which is not enough to compensate for braking. In driving in the mountains recently, I had to stay on the brakes so hard that we thought the coach was on fire. Bad situation! You mentioned that the transmission would have to be reprogrammed. I think shifting to 3rd gear would work, not all the way to 1st gear. Is this something my dealer can do or do I have to take it to Allison? Is this problem covered by the warranty? Thanks.

David & Shirley Stephens

Saint Johns, Florida

Dear David & Shirley,

Most dealers are not equipped to handle the reprogramming. Some of the Allison service centers can correct the problem. But you must contact our chassis service department and allow them to make arrangements with an Allison service center.

Tracing Cause of Brake Failure on '99 Allegro

We own a 1999 Allegro 31-ft. with a Chevy 454 engine. Since buying the unit new in 1999 we have had more than five occasions of total brake failure. On each visit to the service center we were told that no problem could be found. After traveling 150-200 miles, the brakes seem to overheat. Just prior to the failure, the brake pedal feels very hard and then it is all the way to the floor. Very, very scary! I was a professional big rig driver before retirement. We have 51,000 miles on the Allegro. Any suggestions will be greatly appreciated.

Daniel Parker

Slidell, Louisiana

Dear Daniel,

Two possibilities: (1) The brake calipers

could be bad causing you to lose the brakes, but this should be caught with a simple inspection. (2) The most likely suspect is the brake fluid reaching the boiling point. The brake line could be routed too close to a heat source which is boiling the brake fluid. Each time the brake fluid overheats it loses some of its viscosity until it eventually becomes as thin as water.

Hooking Up Tow Car Causes Fuses to Blow

We have a 1995 Allegro. When the tow vehicle is attached, it blows the fuse for all of the lights in the rear of the motorhome. I have to take out the driver's seat to get to the fuse panel—what a chore! Any suggestions as to why we are blowing fuses?

Earl West

Chipley, Florida

Dear Earl,

Your problem could be caused by a number of conditions. You need a service tech who is experienced in wiring tow vehicles to coaches to test for amperage overload. There is a Tiffin dealer and service center in both Panama City and Pensacola.

What Happened to My Gas Mileage?

I just traded a 2005 Winnebago Adventurer for a 2011 Allegro 35 QBA to get the bunk beds option for our grandchildren. I bought it at Lazydays where Tom Webber was a big help on some minor problems. I used to get 8-10 mpg on the Winnebago on the flat terrain of Florida. Also within the state, I am only getting 6.7 mpg on the 35 QBA after logging 2500 miles. Considering the downsizing from a 40-ft. coach to a 35-ft. coach, I am shocked and disappointed at the Allegro's lower miles per

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gallon. I expected to at least get 8–10 mpg. Any suggestions for tuning this engine to improve its mileage? I will appreciate any suggestions. I love your column. Keep up the good work. I look forward to a future trip to Red Bay to meet you and the whole crew (once I cash out a CD for gas).

Peter M. Fallon, DMD
Vero Beach, Florida

Dear Peter,
For the Ford V-10 engine, we would expect the fuel mileage to be a little better than what you have experienced. Even though emissions systems have changed a lot in the last five years, we have owners who report better fuel mileage but they have quite a few more miles on their engines than you do. We don't know anything we can recommend to improve your mileage that is not cost prohibitive. Hopefully, with more miles on you engine, your fuel mileage will improve.

Replacing Manifold Gaskets on '94 Allegro Bay

We have a continuing problem with our gasoline. We have had to replace three manifold gaskets in our 1994 Allegro Bay because of backfires. We have tried filling the tank to the full position. We have tried it at a quarter tank. We have tried sea foam, injector cleaners, and now 100 Octane gasoline @ \$5.50 per gallon. It still backfires. What can I do?

Charles Nelson
Montrose, Minnesota

Dear Charles,
Go to a large parts house that can supply you with high heat resistant plug wires, such as those used in racing equipment. Using this type of wiring should correct the backfiring problem.

Staying Warm While Traveling in Winter

We have a 2011 Phaeton. During travel in the winter, we are almost never able to get warm by using only the automotive heater's vents in the dash. We have to wear our jackets to keep warm. I have

not installed a temperature gauge in the motorhome but it is uncomfortably cool. What should we do?

Clarence Barinowski
Appling, Georgia

Dear Clarence,
The automotive dash heating is not as efficient as the unit in a car for two reasons: First, the automotive heater produces only around 15,000 BTUs (compared to two 35,000 BTU propane furnaces in the coach) and has to heat an air cavity much larger than that of a car. Second, the hot water from the engine has to travel from the rear of the coach to the automotive heater in the dash, causing its temperature to drop significantly. If you cannot stay comfortably warm, you should operate your LP furnace while you are traveling.

Removing the Dog House on the '08 Allegro 32 BA

I have a 2008 Allegro 32 BA. Two questions for you, Danny. (1) How do I remove the dog house to access the top of the engine? (2) Where do I go or who do I call to get a replacement windshield? Thanks.

Carroll André Izac
Rodanthe, North Carolina

Dear Carroll,
The screws that hold the doghouse in place are buried in each corner of the cover. You should be able to part the nap of the carpet to find the screw heads. Once you find them, you can remove the box easily. For a replacement windshield, call Tiffin's parts department. The windshield company we use has warehouses in several locations in the U.S. and can ship it to your location.

Swaying on '05 Phaeton Causes Cabinet Problem

I purchased a 2005 Phaeton 38GH and have experienced a continuing increase in swaying when turning or going out of driveways or a dip in the road. It has increased to the point that the cabinets are coming loose from the walls, a problem

that manifested itself to a lesser degree shortly after I purchased the coach in 2005. What should I do to correct the problem?

Ray Emmons
Huntington Beach, California

Dear Ray,
Flexing of the motorhome is not uncommon, especially with the road conditions that we are seeing in the U.S. in recent years. The cabinets loosening from their moorings into the walls is something that rarely happens on Tiffin coaches. Making the repair should not be a major problem. There are backer plates in the sidewalls where the cabinets are attached. By tightening existing screws and adding additional ones, you should be able to pull the cabinets back into the sidewall. If this is not successful, please take pictures and send it to our service center and they will give you a recommendation on how to make the repair.

Floating Temperature Gauge Problem

For over three years, Freightliner service centers in Chicago and Orlando have tried to correct our problem with the floating temperature gauge. It has gone into the hot zone three times and set off the beeper. After the engine is warm, the needle is usually at the 1/4-point on the gauge. In 15 minutes it moves to the 1/2-point, then down again to the 1/4-point. In two attempts, Freightliner has changed the sending unit, the temp gauge, the message center, and the gauge again. With the temp warning signal and the coolant signal flashing, the engine has died twice on interstate highways. Where should I go to solve this floating temp gauge problem? You have solved two big problems for us in the past. I hope you can figure this one out, too. Thanks.

Tony Pawlak
Point Orange, Florida

Dear Tony,
Many times when a gauge is malfunctioning, it is due to the interference caused by a loose ground. On a Freightliner chassis

instrument cluster, the primary ground is located on the firewall above and to the righthand side of the Onan generator as you are looking to the rear of the coach. There will be two large bolt-type terminals. One will be the power feed and the other will be the main ground from the engine. When not tightened properly, it will produce intermittent current to which the gauges are very sensitive. There is also a ground that goes from the engine block to the chassis frame. Be sure to check this ground, too.

Water Heater Smells Like Rotten Eggs

We are in our second Allegro and enjoyed both of them. In both coaches we have had the problem of the water heater smelling like rotten eggs. It happens after we turn the water heater off and store the motorhome for one or two months. I have to run the hot water faucet for a long time to reduce the smell. It never goes completely away. Can you suggest a correct way to flush the hot water sys-

tem before storage to eliminate the odor?

Carl M. Warfield
Anchorage, Alaska

Dear Carl,
If you have a Suburban water heater, it has an anti-corrosion rod called an "anode." By electrolysis, it removes the corrosive chemicals from your water. When it is spent, it smells like rotten eggs, which is your signal to replace it. Most RV parts stores will have it and you can also order it from the TMH parts and service center.

My Fridge Turns Itself Off En Route

I bought my 2007 Allegro 34 TGA new in August '07. Almost from the start I noticed a quirk in the performance of the Dometic refrigerator and it has become more pronounced. The fridge seems to work fine on shore power, but not when we are traveling. When we are traveling with the fridge on propane, it seems to work OK. Sometimes we travel with the generator running to allow the house air conditioners to cool the coach. When

we travel like that (propane on, generator running, refrigerator set to AUTO), the refrigerator almost always turns off somewhere along the journey. It is possibly affected by a bit of bumpy road, but I can't confirm that. Once back on shore power, I can (so far) get the refrigerator to return to service by turning it off, then on, several times. Why does it misbehave when I travel with the generator running? This is a Dometic model RM2852RB, serial number 70303403. I just had "the board" replaced and that did not remedy the problem. Thanks.

Dick Dabney
College Station, Texas

Dear Dick,
There is possibly a loose connection in the electrical wiring for the refrigerator which is causing it to turn off when you are traveling with the fridge in the AUTO position. Until you can have an electrician track down the bad connection, you should run your unit on the GAS position while you are traveling.

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Phaeton's Asymmetrical Mirrors & Wind Noise

My wife and I just purchased a 2011 Phaeton. Please reference your comment on mirrors to James Wright in vol. 8, no. 1. I understand your answer on safety, but we say "ugh" to asymmetrical mirrors. A corollary problem to the driver's side mirror: even with the window closed, the mirror seems to be creating an unacceptable noise at highway speeds. How do we reduce or eliminate this noise?

Peter & Gloria Waterman
North Scituate, Rhode Island

Dear Peter & Gloria,
A lot of times the wind noise is not coming from the mirror, but from the weep hole, a horizontal slot cut into the bottom of the window frame adjacent to the mirror to let water out of the window frame when it is raining. Try putting a piece of masking tape over that hole and then driving to see if it makes a difference. If it does, you can use a silicone caulk to divert the airflow over the hole. Hopefully this will solve your noise problem.

Faulty Warning System for Jacks

We have a 2000 Allegro Bay 34 on a Ford V10 Triton chassis. Our problem started about two years ago when the warning buzzer for the jacks and the back up camera did not go off after leveling the coach. I had tried resetting by raising and lowering them and turning the ignition off and on several times. I finally gave up and located the buzzer under the dash and unplugged it. I also unplugged the camera. This problem occurs on an intermittent basis today even though we have had it back to our dealer and a local Ford heavy truck repair shop where we were told it was fixed both times.

Also, we have had to replace the chassis and house batteries recently after I discovered them boiling while it was plugged into the shore line. The person at the battery shop asked me if I leave the coach plugged in all the time. I told him

it is plugged in most times and he said I shouldn't do that. He found the plastic cover over the inverter control switches had been exposed to severe heat and said it was from being plugged in too much.

I have read in the past about faulty ignition switches and pinched wiring harnesses in some models. Could either one of these issues cause the problems we are experiencing or do you even think the two problems are related? I look forward to your answer. We really have enjoyed our coach and want to keep it safe and road ready!

Mitch & Mindy Ruger
Springfield, Illinois

Dear Mitch & Mindy,
I think you have an ignition solenoid that is sticking. It is used to allow us to add components and not overload the Ford wiring system. When the solenoid was stuck in the closed position, it was allowing your converter to constantly charge the engine batteries. It would also cause components like the jacks, dash heater, power mirrors, and back-up cameras to be continuously active. The solenoid is located in front of the firewall and is accessible through the hood. It should be replaced.

Questions About the Breeze and the 12-Volt Disconnect Switch

We enjoy *Roughing It Smoothly*, and especially your question and answer column. I have several questions for you.

We are very interested in buying a Breeze when the following items are available: (1) Can we order a Breeze that has *only* the front TV (over dash) with a DVD player and satellite antenna? (2) Does the Breeze have central heat? (3) Does the Breeze require the extra emissions control equipment and the DEF additive? (4) Is an automatic electric awning available as standard equipment? (5) Have all of the Breeze's steering problems been resolved? Would a Steer Safe unit help?

We currently have our second Allegro Bay 37 DB. Why does TMH locate so many 12-volt switches just above floor level at

the entry door? Once you are in the coach it is difficult to see if a switch is ON or OFF without finding a flashlight, kneeling on the outer steps, and twisting yourself into a ball to see if a switch has been accidentally turned OFF. Why not put them at eye level on the wall next to a cabinet?

While camping in Davenport, Iowa, in our first Allegro Bay, I unknowingly hit the 12-volt disconnect switch with a heavy shopping bag. We stopped at two RV repair shops and solicited the aid of an electrical engineer who owned an RV park where we spent the night on our way back to Red Bay. None of the three identified the problem. We bought extension cords, lamps, and an ice chest. When we arrived in Red Bay, a Tiffin service person saw the problem immediately. Our dealer never alerted us to the possibility of this happening, or the intended purpose of the 12-volt disconnect switch. We were on our way back home in 15 minutes, a little embarrassed and a vacation cut short.

Jerry Begué
Slidell, Louisiana

Dear Jerry,
In the Breeze the mid-ship TV is the one that comes as standard equipment. The DVD player is part of the surround-sound option and it is also available with the satellite antenna. If you option in the front TV, the center television can be removed later. However, to realize the economies in a standardized production line, we have to leave the mid-ship TV as your standard.

Central heat: the 28-ft Breeze comes with a single furnace and the 32-ft comes with a double furnace. Also, you can order the optional heat pump in one of the roof AC units.

The International diesel engine we use in the Breeze does not require the DEF additive. The automatic awning is standard equipment.

We believe all of the steering problems have been resolved. Steer-Safe has been added to several units and most owners say that it does help.

On the Allegro Bay, most of the switches at the entrance door are switches that you need to access before or when you first enter the motorhome, such as porch light, inside entry light, step light, and the 12-volt disconnect. That's why we put them in the entrance area so you will not have to go into a dark coach to turn them on. The 12-volt disconnect is placed in the entrance area to allow you to shut everything off with one switch as you leave the coach.

Odometer Went Back to Zero

We have a 1996 Allegro Bus on an Oshkosh chassis. It has approximately 60,000 miles on it. While driving to Alaska, I tried to switch from trip to odometer mileage and could not. The actual coach mileage went back to zero. I have tried several times without success to reset it. Is there anything I can do other than replacing the odometer-trip meter?

Leon Seltenreich
Willow, Alaska

Dear Leon,
There is not anything we know that you can do to recover the mileage record lost on your speedometer. You will have to return it to the manufacturer of the speedometer head to recover the mileage. It is now against the law for a service center or an owner to break into the speedometer head.

Keep Us Short Folks in Mind

We have owned six motorhomes since 1978. On March 29 we purchased our first Tiffin motorhome — a 43-foot Phaeton. It is a beautiful coach and we look forward to a good season of tailgating and cheering for our LSU Tigers. I have just one complaint: the placement of cabinet knobs! Why not put them in the lower corner of the cabinet door. I am 5'1". Look where the knobs are on the uppermost cabinet above the TV in the galley. This can be an easy fix. Thankfully, I have a stool and a husband who is 6'3". I know others have the same problem — many RVers are vertically challenged. I plan to

be taller in my next life. In the meantime, think of us short folks!

Hildred Matkins
New Roads, Louisiana

Dear Hildred,
If you will agree to be an Alabama fan in your next life, then we will see what we can

do about relocating your knobs in this life. Seriously, in a production environment standardization is crucial to maintaining costs. The holes for the knobs are drilled with a jig. Our cabinet designer probably sees the knob placement as a visual balance issue. It might be possible

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to order a coach without knobs and then retain your own carpenter to place the knobs on the bottom corners where they would be most convenient for you.

Low Lumens from My Low Beam Headlights

I have a 2005 Allegro 32 BA which I love. But I do have one problem that I believe is actually dangerous: the inadequate amount of light emitted at night when you click to the low beam headlights. Is there a replacement headlamp that can be installed to provide better light when it is necessary to click off your high beams to avoid blinding an oncoming driver? Under certain conditions, you cannot see well at all. Thanks.

Bob Hensley
West Simsbury, Connecticut

Dear Bob,
It is possible to remove your bulb, take it to a parts house, and get a higher illumination bulb. These bulbs are more expensive but it may solve your problem.

An Electrical Question Regarding Inverter and Batteries

In your response to Frank Crane (*RIS*, vol. 8, number 3, page 60), you stated that “the inverter is wired directly to the battery and does not go through the house battery disconnect.” This may answer an electrical question I have. When I connect to the house batteries, with the house battery disconnect turned OFF, I get a current draw and a buzzing sound in the battery compartment. According to the wiring diagrams for the 2006 Phaeton (drawings 320-100002 pg 1 of 3, and 314-600003), the inverter is connected after the battery cut-off switch. Would it be possible to get revised wiring diagrams for my coach, including diagrams of the battery box connections?

Errol Wilkins
Snohomish, Washington
Dear Errol,
Revisions are sometimes made to sections

of the total schematic. Our electrical engineers can do a computer trace of any revisions, but that does not mean that we can print a revised wiring diagram on one sheet for an owner. Because it is labor intensive, we cannot ask our engineering department to trace the diagrams and make prints on demand.

Programming the Inverter to Start the Generator

I have a 2009 Allegro Bus with the residential refrigerator and a 3000-watt Xantrex inverter. Because I had to leave my coach for several days without access to shore power, I set the AGS to start the generator when the house battery voltage dropped to 11.5 VDC. I checked the following day and found that the genset ran as programmed. I returned three days later to find that my house batteries had dropped to 7.5 VDC and everything in the fridge had spoiled. The monitor indicated that the AGS had gone to manual OFF. Tiffin personnel told me that this is the way Xantrex programmed the inverter, but stated that it could be changed to five times — but not through the control panel to which I have access. This is not satisfactory. Currently, I have to reset the AGS more frequently to insure I do not damage my house batteries or lose the contents of the refrigerator. Several attempts to contact Xantrex have not produced a response. Why is there a limit on the number of cycles to start the generator? Please respond with an answer and persuade Xantrex to reprogram my inverter to allow more consecutive starts. Please warn other owners about this problem. I could not find anything in the manuals about the limited number of cycles. Thank you.

John Mikell
Crossville, Tennessee
Dear John,
Xantrex units come to Tiffin already programmed. Xantrex will not allow Tiffin technicians to make changes internally in

their inverters because of safety considerations and liabilities. Any changes of this nature will have to be done by Xantrex or authorized by Xantrex.

Air Pressure Loss on PowerGlide Chassis

I purchased a 2009 43-ft. Allegro Bus with the PowerGlide chassis and have on several occasions experienced a loss of air pressure in both the front and back suspension within 24 hours of parking the coach. This problem was dealt with by my dealer, Lazydays, who sent the coach to Cummins for repair. After several conversations regarding the issue, they claimed they found the leak and made the repair. It worked for the first leg of a short trip, after which the problem reoccurred. I can only hope the pressure will stay up while driving. Any suggestions for locating and correcting the pressure loss?

Bob Bixler
St. Petersburg, Florida

Dear Bob,
The first thing to check are the release valves in the front and rear. Because it is taking 24 hours for the leak to be apparent, it is obviously a very slow leak. Using soapy water, check as many of the fittings as you can find and gain access.

Power Switchover System

I have a 2008 Allegro Bus. When I took the coach to the Onan-Cummins dealer for generator service and repair, I asked the technician if I could run the generator and plug into shore power at the same time and not hurt the AC units if they were running. He said the switching unit between shore power and the genset would keep the AC units from being affected.

However, when the AC units are running on genset power and I plug into shore power, the circuit breakers for the ACs trip. This is not a problem if it happens when I am in the coach. But, if the power goes off when I am not there and the Auto Gen Start kicks the genset on to run the ACs, the circuit breakers will trip

when the shore power comes back on. This could be a major problem because my dogs would be in the coach with air conditioning and that could be disastrous on some of the 100-degree summer days we have in Texas. Is this a flaw in the system or is there a fix?

Lee Cabibi
New Braunfels, Texas

Dear Lee,
If you plug into shore power with the generator running, be sure to turn off the ACs before you kill the generator. Otherwise, you cause an excessive strain on the generator and will cause a surge from shore power on the air conditioners which will cause the breakers to trip.

Make sure you turn off the ACs before you turn off the generator. Before you plug into shore power, the ACs should be off.

Differential Seal Fails on Workhorse Chassis at 16,000 Miles

We have a 2006 Allegro 32BA. In returning from our trial trip in May for the start of the camping year, we noticed a strange hum in the engine of our Workhorse chassis. Bruce Chevrolet in Hillsboro, Oregon, handles our chassis and engine service. They discovered a blown seal on the differential which resulted in a \$3,000 repair bill on a vehicle with less than 16,000 miles. The parts had to be delivered by Workhorse and caused some delay. I questioned Workhorse service during this time by email (they are extremely difficult to contact and very slow to respond). They basically said “too bad, you are long out of warranty.” I also emailed TMH, from whom we have had great service in the past, and did not receive an answer to my question which is: Should a differential seal fail at less than 16,000 miles and lose all of its oil? There was no trace of damage to the undercarriage.

Others with whom I have talked, including service techs, indicated they had not heard of a differential failure in less

than 50,000 miles. In fact, the service techs said it is unusual to even check a differential before 20,000 miles. Do you think I should attempt to pursue this with Workhorse Service?

Richard Edwards
Portland, Oregon

Dear Richard,
Even a new component can fail. Your mileage and time frame should be taken into consideration. However, since Workhorse has changed ownership, it may be difficult to get a goodwill consideration and reimbursement on your repair.

Ford V-10 Engine Over Revving

I have an Allegro Open Road on a Ford chassis with the V-10 Triton engine. When we are in hilly country with the cruise control engaged, the engine over revs as it downshifts to a lower gear. I have to turn off the cruise and take control of the accelerator pedal. When it downshifts, it revs so high that it sounds like the engine is going to blow. Thanks for your help.

Don Knight
Elk City, Oklahoma

Dear Don,
More than likely it is not the engine over-revving. The electric cooling fans are engaging and making a loud noise to cool the engine down. You can determine this by watching your tachometer to see if the RPMs jump much higher.

Replacing a Leaky Roof

We are possessed by a 1994 Allegro speaking softly into our ear that she would prefer a new roof. As irrefutable evidence of the validity of her whispers, she offers the fact that her roof leaks. May I therefore on her behalf request your advice?

I would like to receive your recommendation for the type of material to use in replacing her roof: canvas, rubber, fiberglass, or aluminum. Please also supply your direction for obtaining a publication which clearly presents its application to her roof.

I am a motivated DIY whose son is an able and state-licensed general contractor, fortunately sympathetic to the needs of his parents. Thanks for your help.

Dan Van Ginhoven
Vero Beach, Florida

Dear Dan,
Your unit was built with a rubber roof and the most economical way to repair it will be with rubber. You could have a fiberglass roof installed professionally, but it will be much more expensive. RV supply centers will sell you the rubber and correct glue to make the repair, but you are not likely to find printed instructions ready for a DIY to read and tackle the job. Your best bet is to talk with a technician and ask for instructions.

Awning “Canisters” — Ugh! Says This Owner

Since buying a 2007 Phaeton in November 2006, I have been trying to make sense of what TMH is doing with the slide-out awnings which have canisters or receptacles on the outer edge of the slide. The apparent design is for the awning to roll into the canister when the slide-out is brought back into the motorhome. But, the canister forms a dam and prevents debris such as pine straw, pine cones, leaves, branches, and ice from simply sliding off the end of the awning to the ground. I cannot count the number of times I have climbed onto the roof to clean off the slide-out awnings before I could bring the slide-outs back in. The 2006 Phaeton did not have canisters on the forward edge which allowed water, ice, and debris to just fall off the awning as you brought the slide back in. Where are your engineers? Who takes your coaches out to test them in different seasons and in all kinds of weather?

I had to climb on the roof today to remove a tree limb. While up there, I noticed a Winnebago next to us. Its slide-out awnings have no outer-edge canisters and the awnings are angled downward. My awnings were full of water, but his weren't. We

are interested in a 2012 Phaeton 42QBH. Can I order it without the slide-out awnings and later have a third party install them without forward edge canisters?

Hal Caplinger
Palatka, Florida

Dear Hal,

The purpose of the canister is to protect the awning fabric when the slide-outs are not deployed. We know it is an inconvenience to clean them, but it keeps you from having to replace your canvas every two or three years.

Black Tank Odor Problem

We own a 2007 Phaeton 40QSH that we purchased new. After the black tank is half full, we begin to notice right after a flush

a strong sewer odor in the area just to the right of the refrigerator, but not in the water closet itself. Once I dump the tank there is no odor until the tank gets half full again. I have found no visible leaks.

Robert Evans
Pensacola, Florida

Dear Robert,

There are two things to check. First, open your dump valve and from the roof run water down the vent pipe into the tank to be sure the vent has no obstructions. Second, be sure that where the pipe protrudes through the roof that it is completely sealed around the pipe. If it is not sealed, odor can come out of the vent and be sucked back into the crack where the seal is broken.

LET US HEAR FROM YOU

“Serious Tech Talk” is a very important section of *Roughing It Smoothly* in which information sharing flows in both directions. Please continue to send your questions to Danny Inman on the enclosed postcard. A separate postcard is enclosed for “From the Road,” a fun part of the magazine for readers to share their motorhome experiences. If you choose to email us at: fredthompson1941@hotmail.com, be sure to put “Roughing It Smoothly” in the subject line of your email. If your communication requires an entire letter, mail it to us at: PO Box 1738, Monroe, GA 30656-1738. Tell us about the interesting places you’ve been, an unusual experience, a great destination, or just a good place to camp and hang out. Please share. “From the Road” contributors will receive a free tee shirt while supplies last.

— Fred Thompson, editor

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Continued from page 4

“Red Bay’s doctors and medical services did a good job of saving Bob Tiffin’s arm when he got it caught in the lint cleaner rollers at the cotton gin in 1970,” Jane recalled. “Dr. Dempsey closed his clinic and rushed to the gin. Oneal Oliver shut the gin down and helped get Bob’s arm out of the rollers.”

“The weather had been very dry and the cotton had a lot of static electricity in it,” Bob explained. “I pushed the cotton into the rollers of the lint cleaner with my hand instead of pushing it in with a paint paddle.”

“Although he made a full recovery and regained complete use of his arm and hand, the flesh and tendons were so chewed up that he had to have skin grafts,” Jane said.

“In the mid-seventies Paul Harvey discovered Red Bay and featured the town in one of his daily radio programs,” David remembered. In the broadcast, Harvey made the statement that there were more millionaires per capita in Red Bay than any similarly sized town in the U.S. The local economy was anchored by Tiffin Motorhomes, Tiffin Supply, Sunshine Mills, two car dealerships plus Bay Auto-

motive, Ford and John Deere farm implementation dealerships, and Keeton Lumber Company. Bob Moore and Gene Steward started Lance Garment Company and employed 240. Wrangler also had a Red Bay operation. During the seventies, the town boasted a locally-owned cable company and a local telephone company.

“In the 40 years following the Great Depression, Red Bay developed a stable economy. The strength of the economy was often measured by the number of people who came to town on Saturdays,” Bob said.


“Nevertheless, locals liked to joke that there were three ways to make a living in Red Bay: farming, loggin’, or bootleggin’,” Jane laughed.

In the Fall, Albert Blanton and Judy Tiffin bought cotton. When the cotton was ginned, samples were sent to Birmingham for grading. The bales were temporarily warehoused with the owner’s ID and grading card number. When the farmer received his grading card, he would bargain back and forth between Albert and Judy to get the best possible price.

“Each Fall the town looked forward to supporting the Red Bay High School Tigers,” Scotty said. The football team went to the state playoffs in ’74, ’75, and ’76.

At home games, the stadium was packed and usually overflowed onto the sloping banks next to the stands. For out-of-town games, the faithful formed caravans that stretched for miles as they traveled to the opponent’s home field.

“Students who were not on the football team or the cheerleading squad were probably in Red Bay’s outstanding 70-member band that was led for three years by drum major Scotty Kennedy,” Jane noted.

Growing up on one of Red Bay’s tree-shaded streets, Scotty didn’t mind that his house was in the center of the neighborhood and the carport was the gathering place for youngsters. He recalled that before Van Tiffin learned to use his bicycle brakes, he preferred to stop by laying the bike on its side in a slide. One afternoon while the older kids were on the carport, Van came flying in from the street on his bike, across the side and into the backyard where Gwen Kennedy had her fresh white sheets drying on three rows of clothesline. Van plowed into the first, the second, and then the third row of sheets which brought him to a standing stop, looking like a ghost three months ahead of Halloween. Such was life in the small town of Red Bay, Alabama in the seventies. 



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